NEWS /A2

Korina Sanchez
suspended for one week by ABS-CBN

SUNDAY BIZ /B1

Jewelry enterprise
built by Dayrit children began with pocket of loose pearls

TALK OF THE TOWN /A12

UP review committee
explains tuition increases in country's premier state university

SPORTS /A24

So, 13, youngest
ever RP national chess champion

Study says optimists outliving pessimists

NEW YORK—OPTIMISTS TEND TO ENJOY longer lives than people with a dimmer outlook on the future, a long-term study suggests.

Researchers found that of nearly 7,000 adults followed since their college days in the 1960s, those who were optimistic in their youth had a lower risk of dying over the next 40 years than their more pessimistic peers.

STUDY /A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Sunday, December 24, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 16 P18

Santa's popularity only Bush could dream about

WASHINGTON—SANTA Claus rises and continues to make glad the hearts of young and old alike.

Fully 86 percent of Americans believe in Santa Claus since they were children, according to an

SANTA'S /A7

Abra gov cries frame-up

American volunteers bring cheer to evacuees

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—CHRISTMAS CAME early this year for survivors of Supertyphoon "Reming" in Barangay Padang, this city.

A group of US Peace Corps volunteers and members of the Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP) threw a Christmas party on Wednesday for some 150 young survivors of the village, which was washed out by lahar on Nov. 30 at the height of Reming.

The volunteers had been here since Tuesday, sprucing up the Gogon Elementary School, where more than 400 families from Padang have sought shelter.

"We made a Christmas tree and a little snowman made of paper, filled the room with decor, prepared food and facilitated games for children, who sang Christmas carols," said Kate Rockenbergert, who hails from New York.

The nine Peace Corps volunteers asked for donations from their relatives in the United States, and tapped PYAP members and other youths from Padang to organize what would be the first sign of Christmas in the shelter.

"It was a lot of fun. The kids really enjoyed. The special numbers were prepared by the youths themselves. We gave away slippers, T-shirts and toys," Rockenbergert said.

"Our goal was to help the kids be kids and hopefully they will be able to leave the bad things behind," she added.

John Campbell, 30, who is also from New York and learned to speak Filipino in her 18 months of stay in Bicol, said: "Minsan mahirap, pero masaya kami sa pagtulong. (Sometimes, it's hard but we are happy to help.)"

Campbell was teaching English in a private college here, when successive typhoons struck and classes were suspended.

Busy with relief work for typhoon Vi-

AMERICAN /A7

HO! HO! HO! BOO!
A man walks on a road near the Kalayaan Hall at Malacañang, unmindful of a life-size Santa Claus figure hanging from a tree as a holiday decoration. EPA/LAIF

Valera denies role in solon's murder

By Volt Contreras

ABRA GOV. VICENTE Valera yesterday denied claims that he masterminded the murder of Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr. and said he was "a victim of a vicious and coordinated frame-up."

In an interview with the Inquirer somewhere in Metro Manila, Valera maintained that he had never gone into hiding and that he had been in the capital for the past two days to attend to family matters.

The 63-year-old Valera, accompanied by his lawyer Jose Agulo Grapilon, requested that his whereabouts be withheld, saying that police investigators were "out to get me and build up a case against me until I get to be convicted."

"I vehemently deny all of the vile and baseless accusations linking me to the sadistic death of the late Congressman Chito Bersamin," Valera said in a prepared statement.

"My conscience is clear. I am the victim of a vicious and coordinated frame-up, although I am at a loss as to who the perpetrators are of these cruel lies."

Bersamin, 61, and his police bodyguard Adolfo Ortega, 49, were gunned down outside the Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on Dec. 16 after attending the wedding of the Abra lawmaker's niece. Bersamin was reportedly planning to run as governor in next year's elections, possibly against Valera's wife who is the incumbent Bangued mayor.

Three days later, retired Army M/Sgt. Rufino Pinalog was arrested in connection with the slayings that were ostensibly an offshoot of the volatile Abra politics. Pinalog told investigators that the killings were carried out by four other men and that he served as a lookout in the operation. (See related stories on Page A6 and Interview with Pinalog on Page A6.)

ABRA GOV /A6

HK organ donor gives hope to 7 patients

HONG KONG—A HONG KONG SCHOOLboy who died in a traffic accident has brought fresher hope to at least seven other patients through the rare mass donation of a large number of his vital organs.

Fourteen-year-old Ma Chi-lie died from brain injuries after being hit by a bus several days ago, but doctors were able to save the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, skin, bones and corneas of the healthy and athletic teenager.

"There were at least seven recipients of the organs," said a spokesperson of Hong Kong's Hospital Authority.

Ma's 41-year-old mother, a single parent on social welfare, ignored the protests of superstitious relatives in insisting on the donations to "bring hope to other families." Hong Kong's Apple Daily newspaper reported on Friday.

"Even though I'm devastated, I want to do something for society," the paper quoted the mother as saying.

HK ORGAN DONOR /A7

Bunye says canceled war games a setback to AFP modernization

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY REiterated that the announced cancellation of next year's RP-US war games was a "setback" to the Philippines' military modernization program, and said the Court of Appeals should consider the country's "international commitment" in deciding on the custody case of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, the spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, also said US authorities "surely understood" that the custody case of the American Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman was now running the course of the Philippine judicial system.

Bunye said the Arroyo administration remained committed to the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, and that it was taking the correct steps to resolve the issue.

But Sen. Panfilo Lacson described as "arrogant political blackmail" the decision of the US government to cancel Balikatan 2007 so as offshoot of the Philippine courts' refusal to return Smith, 21, to US custody.

"The country's policymakers would be well advised not to be cowed by this arrogant political blackmail committed by the US government against an equally sovereign state over an issue that involves our own justice system," Lacson said.

Akbayan Rep. Mujiv Hataman also said the US decision—announced by Adm. William Fallon, chief of the US Pacific Command, and confirmed by the US Embassy in Manila—was an act of blackmail.

"They (the United States) know that the Philippines is very dependent on them as the Philippines is weak in terms of countering insurgency and terror problems. They are using this weakness to blackmail our government

BUNYE /A7

ABRA Gov. Vicente Valera, accompanied by his lawyer Jose Agulo Grapilon, breaks his silence on the Bersamin murder in a clandestine interview with the INQUIRER. NI-CAYON

WHAT'S INSIDE

Brangelina Christmas
Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt to teach kids about kindness this Christmas.
ENTERTAINMENT /E8

That good ol' feeling
What today's children may be missing during the holidays.
LIFESTYLE /C1

Suffolk strangler
British forklift operator charged with murders of 5 prostitutes.
WORLD /A20

Belen Museum
Marikina City offers 300 depictions of Nativity scene.

METRO /A17

Death list
Bayan Muna says 15 more members on killers' list of targets in Sorsogon.
ACROSS /A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Second FRONTPAGE
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006

ABS-CBN suspends Korina for 1 week

By Boysie San Diego Jr.
First two parts

SANCHEZ

HABEAS-TV broadcaster Korina Sanchez has been suspended by ABS-CBN for one week effective Dec. 21.

On Thursday, Sanchez had stopped accelerating (the Inter reports) newscast "Bandila," her morning talkshow on dzMM "Tandaang Palibo si Sanchez," and the ABC talk show "Rosing Today."

According to sources, the suspension covers all platforms—TV, radio and cable.

Mrs. Sanchez will appear in the Dec. 24 episode of "Rated E" today, because it's the magazine show's Christmas special.

"It was also arranged," source said.

Sanchez was reprimanded by the network for "conflict of interest, several officials that called attention to her activities outside of the company, and an editorial lapse," the same sources said.

The "conflict of interest" case arose because Sanchez appeared to "represent a company that produced concerts" and this is to violation of the network's Code of Ethics, the sources said.

According to newspaper and tabloid articles, Sanchez is part of the event-concert-and-a-partner to "Hilary8," which recently produced a concert of the account act M.Y.M.U.

Prior to the suspension, meetings were held between Sanchez and the network as early as September.

That was a para item in Vinny C. Aguilar's column "Cocktales," appearing in the business pages of the Inquirer.

The warnings reached in the mind for against Sanchez and for the matter not to be disclosed to media.

But since ABS-CBN's Code of Ethics dictates a policy of transparency, over a hundred News and Current Affairs employees had been informed of Sanchez's suspension.

The "internal announcement" also mentioned that Sanchez had "agreed to divest" herself of shares in the company that she operated with Antonio P. Sanchez, initially disagreed, she eventually "accepted the exercise in the end."

The humane wind to watch Sanchez, but she did not respond.

Mabuhi Esplanas, ABS-CBN vice president for Government, Corporate Affairs and PR, says this statement by the bosses: "Matter amended. Korina is stressed and will be back after the holidays. She is sure of our stand status, kind-seeking and related journalism."

The one-week suspension does not cover holidays, so it could last until after the Christmas season.

Sources said Sanchez would be back on air on January 2007.

The suspension was seen a blessing for the radio-TV personality, said another source close to Sanchez.

"She's at a crossroads. She seriously considered leaving the network because of her problems and because she was being vexed by politicians to run by the broadcaster in the 2007 elections."

In a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations, Sanchez tied with former Sen. Sergio Osmeña for the ninth and tenth spots in the list of "notable winners in recent newsmaker elections."

SMC sells 65 percent Coke shares to US firm

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. (SMC) yesterday announced it had agreed to sell its 65 percent stake in local soft drinks firm Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) to the world's largest soft-drinks and non-carbonated drinks manufacturer, The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC).

In a joint statement yesterday, SMC and TCCC said they had signed a "definitive agreement" for the sale of SMC's 65 percent in CCBPI. The completion of the deal is still subject to certain conditions which were not disclosed yesterday afternoon.

CCBPI is the jointly-owned holding company which holds the Coca-Cola bottling agreement for the Philippines and includes Coca-Cola Bottling Corp. and Philippine Beverage Partners Inc.

SMC is currently the majority shareholder and has management control of CCBPI.

Sources said a deal was signed yesterday morning. A more comprehensive disclosure will be filed in the United States on Wednesday.

Reliable sources earlier said the sale of SMC's 65 percent stake to TCCC was worth $700 million. Sources yesterday further said that the final price would be determined after certain undisclosed conditions were met.

The deal came amid falling sales volumes for soft drinks, as fruit juice, bottled tea and other noncarbonated drinks gained market share.

TCCC already owns CCBPI, which is the leading soft drinks company in the country and one of the top 10 Coke bottlers in the world.

Sources earlier said that after the sale, SMC would continue to supply glass to TCCC for bottled soft drinks. A "non-compete" clause in the sale document would also bar SMC from countering the soft drinks business for five years, the sources had said.

The agreement comes after amid allegations by a former employee of Coca-Cola Bottling Corp., a unit of the SMC's Coca-Cola Beverage Group, that "the Coca-Cola Beverage Group may have influenced its accounts receivables by P20 billion over an unspecified period, which was cleared by SMC."

The allegations did not scuttle negotiations between SMC and TCCC, the sources said.

Discussions between the two beverage giants had been going on since July this year.

CCBPI accounts for 33 percent of SMC's total revenues and five percent of operating income.

In a report to the stock exchange, the Coca-Cola Beverage Group said sales volumes dropped 12 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier because of stiff competition from unbranded and non-carbonated beverage products. No dividend figures were disclosed.

MUZZLED

Policemen belonging to the Central Police District store chiefs sealed guns during inspection of firearms as a police campaign to prevent the indiscriminate firing of guns on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. (INQUIRER)

Seats for 5 people. Space for 7,500 bands.
At P100,000 downpayment*- it's music to your ears.

The B-Class.
Now featuring the iPod®, with Mercedes-Benz iPod® Interface Kit.

• Affordable music. Luxurious ingress. Versatile seating configuration. The B-Class is built to surprise with more than enough space for passengers and cargo alike.

• Now the B-Class brings you even more comfort, as it becomes available through The B-Drive financing plans, including a P100,000 downpayment. It also comes with its own 30GB video iPod®, with the Mercedes-Benz Interface Kit, for endless hours of entertainment on the road.

• The B-Class. Only at authorized Mercedes-Benz dealers.

Mercedes-Benz

CARS MAGAZINE

Mercedes-Benz Global PH: Corinthian Center Residences, Ayala Center Cebu, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City 6000, Philippines. Tel: (63-32) 232-7777. Mercedes-Benz Manila: 1000 Pasay Rotonda, San Juan City 1500, Metro Manila. Tel: (63-2) 638-3000. Mercedes-Benz Cebu: Cebu Business Park, Cebu City 6000. Tel: (63-32) 232-7777. www.mercedes-benz.com.ph

POWER MAC CENTER

* Subject to bank approval through BA Finance Corporation. Terms and conditions apply. Offer valid until 31 December 2006.

90 tons of pebbles from Palawan seized

AT LEAST 90 1,000 SACKS OF BEACH PEBBLES taken from Talkan in Palawan and weighing about 90 tons have been seized by the National Anti-Smuggling Joint Task Force.

The pebbles were gathered by the Abra Pebble Gatherers Association Inc., based in Barangay Binabo in Cebu, and consigned to one Alejandro Aseo.

The shipment was seized by task force operatives in Bataan, Batangas, on Thursday.

The suspects are in custody, each shouldering one of a string bean—that they no longer qualify under allowable pebble-picking in Palawan Secretary, according to Interior Leandro Fabella and mining engineer Elmer Cimbajo, both regional officers of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"They're gathering already amounts to beach mining, which is against the law," Cimbajo told the business. She cited Rules Pandemics 2003, which prohibits the gathering of gravel and sand from beaches.

"Beach mining destroys the ecological balance and the natural beauty of our beaches," Cimbajo said.

Cimbajo said pebble picking was allowed but that the mines police for such operations should be of a certain size to qualify for commercial use, such as landscaping and building purposes by architects.

Tarra Quismundo

Man hit by bishop's car dies in hospital

CHIEF ELINAS, PAMPANGA—A TRUCKER driver hit by the car of Bulacan Bishop Socrates Villegas died four hours after the accident in Dinalupihan, Bataan, on Friday night.

Insp. Antonio Ignas, Dinalupihan chief, said Reynaldo Morales, 32, died of multiple injuries he suffered from the accident.

The police were filing a case of homicide against Jonathan Geronimo, 34, the bishop's driver.

Geronimo, who was driving Villegas' Ford Lynx, hit Morales' parked tricycle after avoiding a cyclist that crossed the Roman Highway in Barangay Bayan, Orani at past 8 p.m.

Ignas said Morales died at the Cristino Jose Hospital in Bataan City 30 kilometers away.

Beauty Dimpo with a report from Greg Bituin Jr., Inquirer Central Luzon

Mega - sayang Salubong

mula sa Globe Kabalikat

Ika-18 ng Disyembre nagsimula ang Christmas Kabalikat Salubong sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Sinalubong nina Presidente Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo kasama ang ilang mga artista ang mga OFW na umuwi para sa Pasko.

HALA SIRA! Pinas na Pinas na ang feeling ng mga dumalo sa Christmas Kabalikat Salubong dahil sa mga eh-sibhan performers.

VIP WELCOME! Talagang inspeyal ang salubong sa mga Pinoy abroad dahil si Presidente Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, GM Alfonso Cusi ng NAIA at DOT Secretary Ace Durano mismo ang sumalubong sa kanila noong Disyembre 18.

WELCOME HOME KABALIKAT! Kinamusta nina POMA, OWWA Admin. Nito Roque, DOLE Usec. Danilo Cruz ang mga Pinoy na umuwi para sa Pasko noong Disyembre 18.

BASTA OFW DRIVER, OK NA FAMILY PROVIDER. Masayang ibinigay ni Roderick de Guzman mula kay POMA ang isang jeepney mula sa OWWA.

HANDOG NA SAYA PARA SA PAMILYA MULA SA GLOBE. Kitang-kita ang saya sa mga mukha ng Soles Family nang iprinesenta sa kanila ni Ryan Rosario ng Globe ang tseke na nagkakahalagang P20,000 sa Kabalikat Christmas Salubong.

PANGKABUHAYANG PAPREMYO. Iprinesenta ni POMA kina Armando at Ligaya Soles, mag-asawang AMAX retailer at OFW ang P125,000 mula sa Globe at tricycle mula sa PHB.

TOPSY-TURVEY. Sa pamamagitan ng participation ng Globe, naitaya rin si Brad Turvey sa Kabalikat Christmas Salubong noong Disyembre 19.

MAAGANG PAMASKO PARA SA INYO. Nakatanggap ng regalo mula sa OWWA ang mga pamilyang Pinoy na nakasama sa inspeyal na salubong sa NAIA.

ANGHEL SA LUPA. Dahil ang lakas niyo sa Globe, nakasama si Angelica Panganiban sa mga artistang sumama sa pagsundo sa mga Pinoy.

PASKO NA KABALIKAT KO. Nagpamigay rin si Angelica Panganiban ng mga regalo sa mga bagong uwing kabalayan noong Disyembre 20.

Tuloy-tuloy lang ang Merryunions ngayong Pasko. Mula pagdating ng iyong mga kamag-anak galing abroad hanggang sa muling pag-alis, nandito ang Globe, ang Kabalikat ng Pamilyang Pinoy.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

ang lakas mo sa Globe

Suspect in Bersamin killing says it was his first 'hit job'

By Edye de la Cruz
Contributor

ONE OF THE PRIME SUSPECTS in the assassination of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. quit the Armed Forces in 1981 to try his luck as an overseas Filipino worker in Saudi Arabia.

But ex-Army SGSgt. Ruben Pandoy's hopes of becoming an OFW was derailed when he became a victim of an illegal recruiter.

"I thought then that $700 is a substantial amount if converted into pesos so I took a voluntary disability discharge from the service," Pandoy, speaking in Tagalog, said in an interview at Camp Katingal in Quezon City, where he has been detained.

"It paid the recruiters but he turned out to be illegal. That was why even if I had a passport I could not leave. I wasn't able to go abroad as was working abroad."

Pandoy was installed in his house at 229 Loreto St., Barangay Damayan, Mabalo City, three days after the Dec. 16 murder and his bodyguard outside 109, Central Church an Quezon City.

The 63-year-old native of Abra has told investigators he was told by one of those who participated in the killing of Bersamin—but his position's ignorance. Virgilio Tolosa, now the commissioner of the Bureau of Corrections.

Suspects are relatives

All the four other suspects in the Bersamin slaying are relatives of Pandoy.

Pandoy said he had been engaged for cash.

His voluntary separation from the 5th Infantry Battalion in the 2000s had led Pandoy to a number of jobs that included stints as a security guard, a "roadside/tail agent" of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and a "freelancer" in the killing of Bersamin.

An Iloilo source said that Pandoy, who earned in the interview active genocide for had worked with, was no longer in the agency's roster of agents.

Pandoy surrendr the AFP in 1974 at the height of the government campaign against Moro rebels in Sulu but claimed that he had not experienced war while associating with the guerrillas.

"I did administrative work. I had an assistant and field experience," said Pandoy, who was handcuffed and looked disturbed and nervous during the interview.

First hit job

Pandoy also said that Bersamin's killing was his first involvement in an assassination mission. He insisted that the other suspects were known "quarries."

A Quezon City Police District (QCPD) official, who was responsible for Pandoy's arrest, said: "Of course, he would say that he did not have experience in a guns-for-hire because he was just a lookout."

Asked about the previous assassination mission carried out by the other participants in the Bersamin case, Pandoy said there were rumors but he did not ask what those were.

Pandoy admitted to knowing the details of the assassination of Bersamin, the scheduled payoff, the middlemen, and the division of "reward money."

But he claimed he was the lookout because he was "just on the side of the church. That was my role."

Pandoy said he had wanted to cash off the "assassination job." He said he had told the others not to push through with the project. "I wanted to back out."

Under pressure

He declined to answer a question if he had moral influences on the other plotters, only saying, "I feared for my life, they might get me. I was under pressure."

Pandoy told investigators that he and the other suspects were sent to Ilocos Boulevard and Wack Wack in Mandaluyong City at 2 p.m. on Dec. 16, before the murder. He said he was among those people on the run, the main alibis could no longer be used anymore.

Chief Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, QCPD director, said Pandoy was withholding important details of the assassination. "Lately he broke, he will voluntarily divulge the details. It may take a while, but he will eventually fill in the other missing parts of the stories story."

Gatdula said Pandoy had realized he had no idea when the other suspects were but knew revealed the possible hideout of one of his relatives—Freddie Dupo—at a Pajimico subdivision in Quezon City. He told Dupo had told him that his pregnant wife was due to deliver a baby.

Dupo is a former vice mayor of La Paz, Abra, and a former member of the defunct Philippine Constabulary.

'I needed money'

Speaking in a low voice, Pandoy was one of 15 detainees at Camp Katingal. He showed up quiet to the police officer, addressed Bersamin "Sir" and always said, "Opo."

On Dec. 6, Pandoy said he was offered to suspend as member of the Kamikaze Brotherhood headed by detained former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan. He allowed his fresh tattoos marks symbolizing membership in the brotherhood in between his forefingers.

"We are for peace and for the coming May 2007 elections," said Pandoy.

He said his conscience was bothered by the minutes to execute Bersamin, but he also needed the P400,000 promised to him for his participation in the killing of the congressman.

"I was under pressure. I needed money. I didn't have a job," he said.

EX-PANTER Sgt. Ruben Pandoy, center, not locked in the Dec. 1 killing of Akbayan Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr., is being held at the Quezon City Police District. [DAN MERCADO]

FREE
Satellite TV Receiver + Dish
Advance 30-Month Dream 880 Subscription - Only P8,800
SUBSCRIBE TO DREAM NOW! Call (02) 818-8888 (Globe) • (02) 795-3888 (PLDT)
FREE INSTALLATION
WATCH LIVE SPORTS Pay-Per-View ONLY WITH DREAM
DREAM
MD

MBC MANILA BROADCASTING COMPANY
MMDA
MULTIVITAMINS ENERVON
Pilipinas Budget
32nd Metro Manila Film Festival 2006
DEC. 25 '06 - JAN. 5 '07
Piling-piling Pinaka-magagaling na Pelikulang Pilipino
"Ang Festival na ito ay handog sa Mangggawa ng Pelikulang Pilipino"
GRAND PARADE - DEC. 24 SUNDAY
PARADE ROUTE:
ELLIPTICAL TO ALIW THEATER
QUEZON AVE. - ESPAÑA - QUEZON BLVD. - P. BURGOS - ROXAS BLVD.
EDSA - MALL OF ASIA - MACAPAGAL RD. - JALANDONI ST. - SOTTO ST.
HEAVY TRAFFIC IS EXPECTED.
PLEASE TAKE ALTERNATE ROUTES
DURING PARADE
SCHEDULED 2 TO 6 PM
START
ELLIPTICAL ROAD
EDSA
MACAPAGAL BOULEVARD
QUEZON AVE.
QUEZON BLVD.
ROXAS BLVD.
ROXAS BLVD.
JALANDONI
MACAPAGAL AVE.
PITIMAN
Also brought to you by:
PANTENE
HOPE
MANILA BULLETIN
Jergens
LBC
GEOX
DZRH
YES!
HOT

Filipinos want change, but many distrust GMA

MANY FILIPINOS BELIEVE THE CONSTITUTION must be changed, but they do not trust President Macapagal-Arroyo to do the job, analysts say.

Ms Arroyo and her allies have also done a bad job selling constitutional reform to the country, according to analysts.

Many Filipinos see the campaign as simply an attempt by Ms Arroyo to extend her stay in office well after her term expires in 2010.

"I don't think anyone disputes the fact we need reform our Constitution and the way our politicians are elected," says Benjamin Tolosa, a political scientist with the University de Manila University.

"The only problem is no one trusts the President to do it."

For over a year now the question of Charter change has been the overshadowed result of the political debate in the country.

Ms Arroyo has strongly defended her position saying, a parliamentary form of government with one chamber would be more effective at enacting reforms and legislative programs than the current method of government. The existing approach to reform of a 24-strong presidential system with a House of Representatives and a Senate.

Ms Arroyo has argued that the Constitution is no longer attuned to the globalized, market-based economy, gives too much power to the judiciary and prevents foreign participation in key sectors. It also gives the president a single six-year term, which many see as the end reason for Ms Arroyo's push.

"What the Constitution was drafted in 1987, following the fall of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, it was done with the intention of making it difficult to have members strong, one-man rule," says Clovis Goldstein of the political science department at Ateneo University and Pacific.

In recent months, Ms Arroyo and her House allies have been forced to make scenes of embarrassing U-turns in trying to get constitutional change off the ground.

Last week, she was forced to shelve plans for school would have been a House-only constitutional assembly (Con-ass) due to fears of massive street protests organized by the dominant Catholic Church and left-wing groups.

Some commentators have suggested the critical reason the cancelling the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Cebu City next month, which Ms Arroyo to do with the political situation in Manila than with bad weather or threats of a terrorist attack.

Last Sunday, the powerful Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) were joined with a planned rally against Charter change. But the CBCP instead to stay a "Thanksgiving Mass," believing Ms Arroyo would no longer go ahead with her plans to amend the Constitution.

The rally drew between 10,000 and 50,000, well short of the 500,000 the Church had hoped to draw.

Last Tuesday, however, Ms Arroyo said in a speech before the Asian Development Bank that constitutional change was not dead but back on the agenda. Ms Arroyo did not elaborate what form or shape it will take.

"She says one thing and does another," Tolosa says. "But the problems are here in this country runs much deeper than most of the Presidents . . . the people have lost faith in their political leaders right across the board." Clarito Carlos, a political scientist with the University of the Philippines, agrees: "The people are physically and emotionally tired of politics . . . hence the low turnout on Sunday."

62 percent of Pinoys see happy Christmas

DESPITE THE DESTRUCTIVE TYPHOONS, widespread killings and political unrest this year, three out of five Filipinos are looking forward to a happy Christmas, according to the latest survey of the Social Weather Stations.

The percentage of Filipinos expecting a happy Christmas (62 percent) was the same as that in the 1998 poll.

Expectations of a happy Christmas have been on the downtrend since 2002, four years ago, 82 percent of Filipinos said they looked forward to a happy Christmas. Only 77 percent in 2003 and 64 percent in 2004 shared the same sentiments.

In the latest survey, a total of 1,200 respondents from all over the country were asked: "Sa pangkalahatan, masasabi po ba ninyo na ang inyong Pasko ngayong taon ay maginging masaya, malungkot, hindi masaya at hindi rin malungkot (in general, can you say that your Christmas this year is going to be happy, sad, or neither happy nor sad)?"

Only 7 percent this year said they were anticipating a sad Christmas, while 29 percent said they were neither happy nor sad.

Among the respondents expecting a happy Christmas, most are in Mindanao (70 percent of the area), followed by the rest of Luzon (65 percent), Visayas (60 percent) and Metro Manila (45 percent).

Sixty-nine percent of respondents from the A, B, and C classes said they anticipated a happy Christmas, compared to 62 percent from the D class and 58 percent from E class.

Asked what they were most thankful for in life, 41 percent of the respondents answered "good health." This was followed by the 28 percent who said they were thankful for "being alive."

Three were also the two most popular reasons cited in the 2003 survey. Other reasons cited were "being able to cope with day-to-day living," "having food on the table," better livelihood, and "peace."

The latest survey had a margin of error of plus and minus 3 percentage points. Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research

Opinion polls show Ms Arroyo's popularity remains low. A recent survey by the Social Weather Stations even showed eroding support in Central Visayas, one of Ms Arroyo's bailiwicks.

"(Ms) Arroyo has lost a great deal of credibility in the eyes of ordinary Filipinos. That is why they don't want her tinkering with the Constitution," Carlos says.

The next question will remain over the way Ms Arroyo does come to power following the cancellation of popularly elected Joseph Estrada in 2001, and her election victory in 2004, which the opposition claims she stole with the help of the military.

Ms Arroyo has faced down a mutiny by junior officers in 2003, two impeachment attempts and a failed coup in February.

"She is determined to muddle through the next three years as a lame duck president whose only objective is political survival," Carlos says.

Christmas spirit missing in Bangued

By Frank Cimatu and Leonicio Bellen Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANGUED, ABRA—THE CHRISTmas spirit in this provincial capital was noticeably absent yesterday, a week after the slaying of Abra Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr.

The capital's grounds were empty, except for five tired policemen in full battle gear.

A clear sign is on top of the capitol building and reflects Abra's overwhelming preoccupation coming down from it. Santa Claus figures are hung on the side of the donation plaza.

But Charrie Bersamin, the slain lawmaker's eldest daughter, said the family would try to cheer up despite the tragedy.

"We will be spending Christmas with Jay [Allen] here," said Charrie. "We will try to keep our spirits up but we hope this will be the last [attack]."

"We've done he have to be the sacrificial lamb?" she asked.

But Rozelle Ortega, a barangay councilor of San Juan here, says this could be the happiest Christmas for Abra. She says the Dec. 16 slaying in Quezon City could finally expose the complicity of top officials in the province in the violence that has plagued Abra politics for years.

'A brighter future'

"This is our chance to have a brighter future ahead of us," said Ortega, the wife of SPO3 Adolfo Ortega, the policeman who was killed with Bersamin.

Ortega will be buried on Dec. 29, two days after Bersamin's burial.

On the electric post around Bangued are posted coupon bond-sized flyers with a photocopied picture of Bersamin sprawled and bloodied on the ground. The flyers carry the statement: "Justice for Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr."

A huge poster of a soldier Bersamin, with the statement "Justice to Cong. Chito Bersamin."

And although Valera's house appears to be vacant, that of Bersamin has a steady stream of people expressing their condolences.

Prominent families

It was a sad state of affairs for the two most prominent families in Abra.

Valera's grandfather, Quintin Pandes, who was born here in 1880, had a long career in statemanship. He was speaker of the House of Representatives and was also a senator.

Juan Villamor, a great-grandfather of Bersamin, was the first governor of Abra. Villamor's cousin, Ignacio Villamor, was the first Filipino president of the University of the Philippines and his son, Jesus, was a World War II hero from which Villamor Air Base took its name.

The two have values: there's the bridge was built. It looks decrepit now and is used only to hang laundry. People thought the bridge represents a link among relatives. Not anymore.

A SYMBOL wooden bridge connects the ancestral houses of the families of slain Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. and Abra Gov. Vicente Valera in the capital town of Bangued. A symbol of friendship of the top two politicians of Abra, the bridge would be closed whenever a rift between them erupts.

Bridge connecting Valera, Bersamin houses closed

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANGUED, ABRA—"THE BRIDGE has fallen down," said lawyer Alfredo Villamor, uncle of slain Abra Rep. Luis "Chito" Bersamin Jr.

Villamor was referring to the wooden bridge connecting the ancestral houses of Gov. Vicente Valera and Bersamin behind the provincial capitol.

The Valeras' ancestral home actually belonged to Valera's grandfather, Quintin Pandes, while that of Bersamin's original ly belonged to his father, Dr. Luis Bersamin Sr.

The "abaca" house remained its wooden structure while the Bersamin house added a third floor and a concrete facade facing the road. Both were painted in the same cream color.

The wooden bridge is the symbol of the friendship between the two families.

"Years ago, when the two Pandes and Bersamin quarrelled, the bridge was closed. There s opened again," Villamor said.

"Yesterday [Friday], it was closed again," said one of the lawyers in the Bersamin house on hold, referring to the time when Valera was tagged the financier in the killing of Bersamin.

Bazar torn down

"I wished that they would just tear down the bridge and not re-open it," said Villamor in the news.

Valera's parents and their helpers are staying in the house.

In front of the house is a carpenter drawing Valera's image riding a white horse, his representative post.

After the announcement of Valera's supposed involvement in Bersamin's murder, police raided the governor's house in Emerald Hills here and the houses of at least two mayors closely associated with and his bodyguards.

In the Bersamin house's gate is a statement with the statement: "Justice to Cong. Chito Bersamin."

And although Valera's house appears to be vacant, that of Bersamin has a steady stream of people expressing their condolences.

Prominent families

It was a sad state of affairs for the two most prominent families in Abra.

Valera's grandfather, Quintin Pandes, who was born here in 1880, had a long career in statemanship. He was speaker of the House of Representatives and was also a senator.

Juan Villamor, a great-grandfather of Bersamin, was the first governor of Abra. Villamor's cousin, Ignacio Villamor, was the first Filipino president of the University of the Philippines and his son, Jesus, was a World War II hero from which Villamor Air Base took its name.

The two have values: there's the bridge was built. It looks decrepit now and is used only to hang laundry. People thought the bridge represents a link among relatives. Not anymore.

Corrections

ON THE DEC. 23 ISSUE, a caption of a front-page photo misidentified the name of the woman who was crying beside the casket of Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. The grieving woman is Victoria Valera, the mother of Abra Gov. Vicente Valera—not the mother of Bersamin. Rosario Bersamin, the mother of the slain congressman, died in 1998.

* * *

ON THE DEC. 23 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Muslims celebrate start to on Dec. 27"—misstated the date of this year's Eid'l Adha, a major Muslim feast. Following the lunar calendar and the actual sighting of the crescent moons, Muslims in the Philippines as well as in many parts of the world will celebrate the feast on Dec. 31—not Dec. 27.

* * *

ON THE DEC. 21 ISSUE, a Metro Manila Film Festival guide on Page 11 of the Entertainment section misstated the name of one of the actors in the film, "Ynang Antatawak Ay Mawawala." The correct name of the actor in the film is Christian Vasquez — not Bacolod.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in articles in the Daily Inquirer, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor, Media Center Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax this: 897-8332 or e-mail to libel@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Letters Editor Thet, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax this: 897-8332 or 896-6214. Inquirer Advocate: The phone number is 897-0000 local 582.

A BLACK armband in memory of slain Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. is hung on the provincial capitol in Abra.

Bersamin and Valera had not been talking to each other since the 2001 election.

Charrie said her father had already been the one agreeing to a compromise while Valera was the one always putting him on the spot.

Lastly, she said, Valera had been reminding her father about a "covenant" they signed where Bersamin would have to step down as representative and run for mayor of Bangued instead.

"All my father was asking them [Valera] was for one more term. He also told the President that he would be running for governor," she said.

"When they killed [Board Member] James Bersamin, I told him, 'That is a warning to you to be a Bersamin.' He had an exchange of words. But he insisted [on not having security bodyguards]. He sometimes took the back of a tricycle here in Abra," Charrie said.

Magallanes, who is Bersamin's security aide here, said the lawmaker did not want him being seen with a bodyguard. "He always said that he had no enemies," Magallanes said.

Abra gov cries frame-up

From page A1

Pandey named three of the alleged assassins all of Sagap—Dingin Dapo, Dondonador Barbosa and Sonny Tecson. The fifth man has not been identified. Barbosa was described as the gunman and Tecson the driver of the getaway motorcycle. The rest were inside a van.

On Friday, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon announced that Pandey had revealed to investigators that Dapo, a former Philippine Constabulary member and ex-vice mayor of the municipality of La Paz, had implicated Valera in the killing.

Pandey disclosed that Dapo had told him that "a politician" from Abra had promised P1 million for the assassination of Bersamin and that when Pandey had pressed Dapo for details, Dapo had said the politician was Valera, according to Calderon.

'Political allies'

Pandey, he said the slain lawmaker were actually "political allies," Valera urged the PNP to look into other angles other than politics.

"In fact, they should look at a business angle, old grudges, perhaps even family situations," he said, when asked if he himself could offer clues.

Valera said he did not know Pandey. But he admitted that Dapo was "a party-mate identified with me" in the 2004 elections. He said he had lost contact with Dapo since Dapo survived an ambush last year and went into hiding.

Asked why he had not shown up at Bersamin's funeral if indeed there were no animosities between them, Valera said he had been planning to but was advised by his siblings not to go because they feared "bad things being said about me," especially by the lawmaker's children.

"We [Bersamin and I] practically grabbed his children together but some how we've resolved personal issues believing that I have something to do with this, which is probably why they said those things," he explained in Filipino.

Wedding guests

Valera said his wife Ma. Dia were guests in the wedding but left the church 30 minutes before the shooting, according to police investigators who had talked with the lawmakers' relatives.

In yesterday's interview, Valera conceded that, based on warnings he got from his siblings and supporters in Abra, Bersamin's children—Charrie and Jaul—"have things about me," that's why he had not gone to the congressman's wake.

He insisted that he was in the capital for the past few days, not in "disappear" but to arrange his family's annual Christmas get-together on Dec. 25 in Tarlac. This has been traditionally held in Metro Manila.

Aside from being political allies, he said he and Bersamin were "close relatives."

Valera's wife and former Vicdens was the one who helped the Bersamin clan in the funeral arrangements of the congressman in Bangued," Valera said.

Valera also sought to explain why he left the church early. On the day of the wake, he had suggested that they go to the reception at New World Hotel. In Makati ahead of the big crowd. The usual post-wedding photographs were still going on when the couple left the church, he said.

Valera said he later heard about the shooting while on the way to the hotel.

Exchanging jokes

Before the wedding started, he said Bersamin were even exchanging jokes about how they have gained weight, Valera recalled.

"Chito and I practically grew up under the same roof. [Our] sons probably the only houses in the Philippines whose windows were connected by a bridge. That wooden bridge was built by our ancestors and it was already there when we were both born," Valera said. (See story on this page.)

He said their forebears—the late and Bersamin were friends since childhood and through their college years.

Valera also questioned the search warrant that was used as basis by the PNP's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in raiding his house in Bangued on Friday, where he allegedly kept high-power firearms. The warrant had been issued by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

"We all know that a search warrant should be issued in relation to an existing case," said Valera, who is also a lawyer. "The search conducted in my home was not related to the investigation surrounding the death of the congressman."

Unaware of political plans

Told of reports that Bersamin was planning to remove the gubernatorial post in Abra next year, Valera said: "That's the first time I heard of that. In fact, before the incident, I heard that he's been telling the reports that 'we need to talk with the governor about our three-year year.'"

Valera also showed the reporters a copy of a "Covenant of Amity" which he, his wife and Bersamin signed in January 2004 wherein they made the following vows: "That Mayor Valera would not contest the lone congressional district of Abra in the May elections of that year "upon request" by Bersamin; That she will support Bersamin's plan to run for mayor of Bangued "after the elections of 2004" or after he had served a term as congressman.

Bersamin, in turn, would support Mayor Valera's plans to run for Congress after the 2004 polls, according to the document.

75-percent breakthrough

Also yesterday, Calderon told reporters that investigators had scored a "75-percent breakthrough" in the case but that "we're still gathering more evidence." He made the statement after he was briefed by Quezon City police chief Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatchalia.

Police have filed two counts of murder against Pandey, Dapo, Barbosa and Tecson and the unidentified fifth person.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said no administrative sanctions would be lodged against Valera unless a formal complaint was brought against him. "I can't rely on newspaper reports," Puno said.

With reports from Doris E. Bautista and Norman Bordadora

VALERA, together with his wife, Bangued Mayor Maria Dia Valera (left) and daughter Nita, during the exclusive interview with the Inquirer.

Bunye says canceled war games a setback ...

From page A1

norm," the party-list representative said.

Leave it to the court

In a interview with the state-run Radyo ng Bayan, Bunye pointed out that Estrella's case had been elevated to the Court of Appeals.

"What is important is to have an early resolution. We leave that to the sound judgment of the [appellate court]... but [it] should consider our international commitments," he said.

Asked if he was aware of reports that Bolton had profiled our US troops helping in relief operations in typhoon-devastated areas in Bicol due to concerns over the legal rights of American soldiers, Bunye said: "But here no information on this, but we will not be unprepared if that will be their action. But we are hoping that we will resolve this the soonest within the judicial system."

Malacañang "respects" the US government's decision to cancel the joint military training exercises and "under-stands" its concern over the custody issue, he said in a statement issued later in the day.

"The cancellation of these exercises is a setback on our military modernization program, the inter-operability of Philippine and US forces, and the strategic alliance of both countries pursued on does-bounded two eras more than a century," Bunye said, adding:

"We hope that the exercises can be put back on track as soon as possible."

Cancellations

Bunye also said the Philippine government was "firmly committed to the VFA" and was "understanding all means to have Smith transferred to US custody to stand trial under our judicial processes."

"The US government and the American people warmly welcomed the visit to the executive branch and the courts under the democratic separation of powers," he said.

"We are not making excuses for the [non-]implementation with the VFA, but we have to wait relief through the justice system that defines the rule of law," he said.

Bunye also said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo had been ordered to relay this message to their US counterparts and other concerned officials.

Smith has been held in the Makati City Jail since Dec. 4, when Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon convicted him of raping "Nicole" at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1, 2005.

The soldier requested that he be returned to US custody for the duration of the appeal process, based on the provisions of the 1998 Bal Pecos, citing the same agreement, denied the request.

Smith's lawyers took his case to the appellate court, but it said it must review Pozon's commitment order before making a decision.

The US Embassy maintains that Smith's continued incarceration at the Makati City jail is in violation of the 1951 Philippine-US Mutual Defense Treaty and Foreign Affairs have registered concerns with the US position.

'Small problem'

Subic Sen. Benjamin Locsin said he was excited to see the scrapping of next year's war games because of "a small problem," and expressed fear that the projects being undertaken in his province under the Balikatan would be jeopardized.

Locsin said Subic had been benefiting from the joint exercises, citing the many projects, including classrooms, bridges and roads.

"It is so sad because [this is] a small problem. But our then reaction should not be like that, but we cannot do anything if that is their decision," he said.

Locsin suggested that the Philippine government pardon Smith as a means of convincing the US government to change its mind on the cancellation of Balikatan.

"[What] we have some overseas Filipino workers in order to make it other countries, we always have the power to get them back home for humanitarian reasons. And several times, our requests were granted. Why not return this favor? I hope we have this attitude of reciprocity," the governor said.

For Balikatan 06-2, Lt. Commander Jeffrey Gordon, information officer of the US Embassy in Manila, explained that only Balikatan 2002 had been cancelled and that this year's military exercise, including its humanitarian component, would proceed as scheduled.

"The United States has no plans to suspend financial and development assistance," he said.

Lumenda said projects being undertaken by US forces in Subic and in other parts of Mindanao would be implemented until completion.

He expected that humanitarian and civil military projects to continue in Mindanao," he said.

'If we cave in ...'

Senator Lacson said that while the executive branch was doing its part to get a favorable judicial interpretation of the VFA provision on custody, the US government should respect the rulings of the Philippine justice system.

"This unbelievable incident should serve as a cost to the national leadership. If we cave in to this threat, we have no business talking about self-respect and love of country," he said.

According to Herman, Smith's case is not covered by the VFA.

"The US government should respect the judicial system of a democratic country like ours, which has been patterned after theirs. They should respect the sanctity of the democracy here," he said.

He also urged the national leadership to "look for allies that are supportive and respectful of our laws and policy."

'Good thing'

The military-Bayan Alumanag Makabayan, through its secretary general Renato Reyes Jr., said the cancellation of the Balikatan was a welcome development.

"We welcome [it]. It is a good thing. It is not something the administration should be apprehensive about. We are not on the losing end here," Reyes said.

"In any case, our country can proudly stand up to our mechanisms: our territory and legal system," he said.

Bayan has repeatedly criticized the annual war games as a violation of Philippine sovereignty.

According to Reyes, the scrapping of the Balikatan showed how US and their ties are using the VFA "as a legal shield for US troops" in the country.

"It is one of the foundations of continued US military presence and intervention," he said. "You do away with the VFA and you weaken a better chance of stopping US military intervention in the country."

Reyes also said the Philippine government, including the judiciary, should pay more attention to the legal issues involving Smith's rape case and the VFA "than give in to pressure tactics being employed by the US government."

"The US government may not threaten us to enforce military aid ... [It] will not diplomatic pressure to restore its own untouchable status in the country," he said.

In a report, Reuters said the US pressure tactics had given nearly $500 million in military aid to the Philippines since 2000 and sent hundreds of advisers to train local troops fight Muslim insurgents. Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora, Inquirer; Jaime S. Aligada and Avelino Mañalac, Inquirer Mindanao

HK organ donor brings hope to 7 patients

From page A1

"[My son] is very great. Even though he's left us ... no one will hear him breathe, and his heart beat. He's already become an angel," she said.

Doctors hailed Alfa's case as an example to others in Hong Kong, where organ donorship is traditionally frowned upon given the Chinese belief in keeping bodies whole to allow the deceased to rest in heavenly peace.

"This is a very encouraging event ... We're desperately in need of organs," said Dr. Chiu Kin, president of the Hong Kong Medical Association.

Last year, only 4.2 of every million people in Hong Kong donated organs to various specialties, second 5 times less than in the United States, according to the Apple Daily. Reuters

American volunteers bring cheer to evacuees

From page A1

time in Padang, she said that like the children of Bicol, she, too, waded through waist-deep flood waters.

Neck-deep in mud

However, her experience was nothing compared to the stories of other children, just as they told of America.

The 14-year-old who lost everyone save for her mother, tumbled under torrents of mud and rocks and when she was finally rescued, her whole body, except for her head, was buried in mud.

"They are too young to experience such a great disaster and it was really hard for them to understand everything," Campbell said of the young survivors.

Campbell was a reporter for The New York Times until she decided to leave her job after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

"I lived near ground zero. After the attacks, I decided to volunteer for the Peace Corps. I wanted to show people in the world what Americans are really like because after 9/11, people had the impression that Americans are bad, selfish and greedy," she said.

She added that most of them in the Peace Corps were activists. Most came from the middle class and received an eclectic, going for a small living allowance.

"I wanted to reach out to people. I wanted to volunteer and do it full-time," Campbell said.

Children's party

Hanin Budin, 19, city president of the PMSI said children smiled all throughout the early Christmas party which lasted more than two hours.

"The disaster created unity among the city's youth. We were brought together to do whatever we can for the typhoon victims," Budin said.

"It was the first time to reach out to the wider of a disaster and in spite of the language barrier, I could discern relevance and courage among the children," Budin-Borgen said.

She was happy to see the youth working together preparing food and organizing the program. Even young survivors from Padang helped in the party preparations.

Fulfilling

"This is one of the most fulfilling things I've ever done...giving my time for the children. They used to be kids and he gives opportunities to express themselves," Borgen said.

She narrated that on her first day in the evacuation center, she met a 6-year-old boy who sat quietly in a chair and would sometimes hide out at other children.

"With the little Filipino I knew, I asked what was bothering him," Budin-Borgen said.

The boy answered that he was sad because his mother and sister were in the hospital, being treated for injuries.

"He was quite isolated and would hurt other children – probably because of pent-evacuation stress. We got him involved in activities and he learned to play with other children," she said.

Sad to leave

Rockenbrodger said she was deeply inspired by her experience in Aceh and would be sad to go when her 22-month term ends soon.

The Peace Corps is an independent federal agency of the United States.

More than 187,000 people have served in 139 countries with the Peace Corps since it was established in 1961.

They have volunteers in over 70 countries around the world, providing technical assistance in government, education, health, HIV/AIDS, business, information technology, agriculture and the environment.

Santa's approval rating only Bush could dream about

From page A1

AP-AOL News poll.

That's an approval rating that President George W. Bush and most lawmakers in Congress could only dream about these days.

And despite the multiethnic nature of the country, more than 80 percent of those with children at home consider Santa important in their holiday celebrations or so.

Among the findings:

• Santa is important to 68 percent of Catholics, 91 percent of those without a religious affiliation, and 47 percent of Protestants, when households both adults and without children are surveyed.

• But nearly half (47 percent) of the respondents say Santa detracts from the religious significance of Christmas, one-one-third (36 percent) say he enhances the religious nature of the holiday.

• Ninety-one percent of whites believe in Santa as a child, 72 percent of minorities do.

• An overwhelming majority across nearly all backgrounds and religious beliefs, say they believe in angels—91 percent. Belief in angels is shared by 97 percent of those who say they have no religious affiliation. Nearly all white evangelical Christians, 97 percent, share this belief.

Tradition survives

Somehow, the Santa Claus tradition has survived all that challenges tradition.

Carl Anderson studied Santa beliefs as a doctoral student 20 years ago, looking at the phenomenon then and a century earlier. A child psychologist with a long, coal beard, he's since put in 18 Christmases as the Dallas Northfield Circus absorbing the wide-eyed wishes of little ones.

So what's new, Santa?

Remarkably, according to Anderson, not much. The top wishes appear to have remained largely intact since the topic was studied in the late 1980s.

Pets kids have challenged him over the years, Anderson says. When one little girl did so, tenaciously, this week, he did what psychologists always seem to do. He answered by asking a question.

"Santa, some people are saying they don't believe in you," the little girl told Anderson shyly.

"Well, what do you say to them?"

"I tell them they haven't seen you."

Case closed, for sure.

In the poll, it was the teenage age for a child's innate reality check. When parents hung on to their belief were age 10. The telephone poll of 1,000 adults was taken Dec. 11-14 by Ipsos, an international polling firm. It has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Reality check

Anderson shared his historical expertise with an elite group this summer in Missouri, addressing the international convention of the amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas.

In the Dallas mall, he knows the limit-looking up at him will be clouded by questions before long. But for many kids, the letdown also comes with an upside.

"They see themselves as more grown up," he said through that beard. "They're on the other side now."

Study says optimists outliving pessimists

From page A1

On average, the most pessimistic study participants were 42 percent more likely to die at any cause than the most positive participants, according to findings published in the Mayo Clinic Proceedings medical journal.

The results translate to about a number of past studies on personality factors and health, including research that has linked optimism to longer life.

One study of elderly adults found that those with a positive view of the future were less likely than pessimists to die over the next decade—regardless of their health at the start of the study.

The current findings could be explained by any number of factors, according to the study authors, led by Dr. Hindy B. Grossardi of Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina.

For example, those researchers say, optimists are less likely to suffer from depression than are pessimists, which could, in turn, affect their physical health. They may also maintain a healthier lifestyle, paying more attention to their diet and exercise habits.

Only temporary

These latest findings are based on a 10-year follow-up of 4,964 men and women who entered the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in the mid-1960s. At the time, they took a standard personality test that gauges a person's tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic.

In general, optimists believe negative events are only temporary and don't let them affect their overall attitude about themselves and the world.

Pessimists, in contrast, take such events to heart, often blaming themselves and believing that the bad times will last forever.

In this study, 1,030 were deemed pessimists and 922 optimists, while most were judged to be somewhere between a pure optimist or pessimist.

Difficult to change

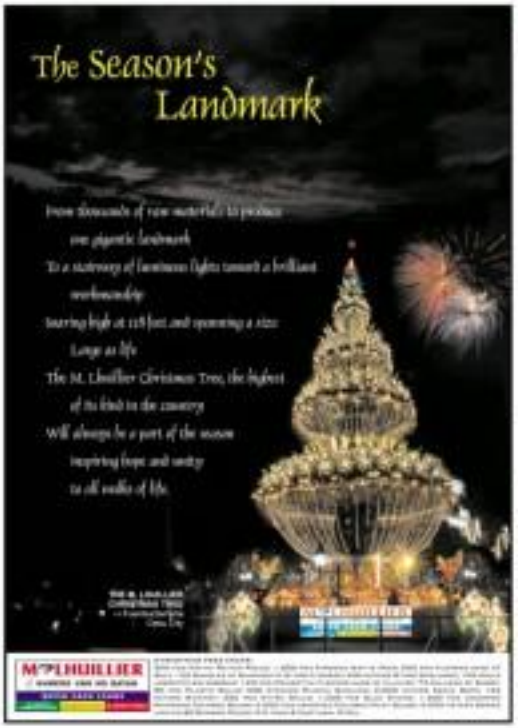
If pessimism is a risk factor for premature death, that begs the question of whether anything can be done about it.

It is difficult to change the basic components of your personality, according to Grossardi.

However, she adds, "there are many aspects of personality that can be modified to a certain degree if an individual is motivated to do so."

For example, Grossardi says, people who feel they are pessimistic even tend to have disease and premature death—may be able to change their ways with the help of major management therapy.

On the other side of the spectrum, people who are helplessly sunny could, in this study's view, do an example, Grossardi points to meditation, which, according to some research, may boost positive emotions. Reuters



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2006

DAVAO police continue to crackdown on firecrackers to keep the city firecracker-free over the New Year's Day. Police recently confiscated various firecrackers and other pyrotechnic products. The ban has kept Davao City quiet on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The enforcement of the ban is also on the lean to smoking.

Bulacan firecrackers light up Europe skies

By Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon

SAN RAMEL, BULACAN—FIRECRACKERS AND pyrotechnic products made in Bulacan are lighting up the skies of Europe and Micronesia.

Imagine Fireworks Inc., a manufacturer and distributor of firecracker and pyrotechnic products based in the town, has penetrated the world market since it started shipping its products abroad in August.

Jones Ong, the firm's president, said more orders from foreign customers were expected before the year ends.

"We are happy and proud to be from Bulacan. Really, we are conquering the world through our products," he said.

The firm of Ong's father, a member of the Philippine Pyrotechnic Manufacturers and Dealers Association Inc. (PPEMDA), came to smuggled firecrackers and pyrotechnic products, especially those from China, started flooding the local market.

Ong said several foreign clients had sent him e-mails asking why the Dragon products they bought in Bulacan were not available in their countries.

This, he said, prompted him to explore the export market.

Ong said China had been supplying 80 percent of the world's demand for firecrackers and pyrotechnic products.

He feels, he said, wants to target even a small percentage of the remaining 20 percent not supplied by China.

He said he would look at the international market after local sales suffered due to competition from smuggled Chinese products sold at lower prices.

Competing with China

Ong said manufacturers in Bulacan, the country's "firecracker capital," had been complaining about the proliferation of smuggled pyrotechnic products.

"We cannot compete with them. Our business has been adversely affected. But we prefer to withdraw our business legally as we started looking at the international market," Ong said.

He assured the public not to be deceived by the cheap imported firecrackers.

He said those flooding the market were "Class C" products from China that were inferior in quality.

Ong said several firecracker-related accidents had been attributed to the use of these smuggled products.

He said Dragon products could compete with the more expensive Class A and Class B products from China.

Public warned anew: Don't explode crackers, overeat

By Christian V. Esguerra

BEFORE YOU LOAD YOUR SON Roger (an improvised "cannon" for firecrackers) or fill up that bottle plant, consider that warning from the Department of Health.

You won't have a merry Christmas or a happy New Year if you lose a finger or two to firecrackers, or suffer a stroke or a heart attack as a result of reckless eating.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III yesterday reiterated the annual reminder against firecracker use, pointing out the increase in the number of injuries recorded since 2006 rolled in.

A total of 448 people were injured, mostly by exploding firecrackers, nationwide starting from the evening of Dec. 21, 2006, to Jan. 1, 2006.

The figure was 467 during the same period in 2004-2005.

Particularly alarming to the DOH was the increase in the number of cases of ingestion of wrong/altering firecrackers.

There were nine cases during the December 2005-January 2006 period compared to only four in 2004-2005.

"We appeal to parents to really watch over their children," Duque said at a press conference. "They may even inspect their children's drawers and check for ammo."

The campaign against the small but deadly firecracker is so serious that the DOH released a separate health advisory for it.

Symptoms

The advisory listed the symptoms of wound poisoning: burns, burning pain in the throat and gastric odor of the breath, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and shock.

In case of tetanus infection, Duque prescribed the administration of egg whites (six to eight for children and eight to 12 for adults) before proceeding to the hospital.

As a first aid measure, egg whites can deal with the deadly components of the ammo, such as phosphorus, potassium nitrate and potassium chlorate, Duque said.

Another concern for the DOH is the non-popular boga, which is supposed to be denatured alcohol.

In a press conference in January 2006, the DOH said the boga was responsible for 16 injuries.

Curiously, the ammo belongs to the list of "legal" fireworks. But it is not clear without the boga falls.

Other legal firecrackers are the bawang, baby rocket, small triangle, Judas belt, sparklers, bass, Roman candle, wiwigelli, whistle bomb and sky rocket.

The illegal ones are the big triangle, super Lolo and its equivalents, mother rocket, tore ass, 0G, pla-pla, and pillbox.

Think twice

The holidays are dangerous in terms of not only firecracker but also of overeating, especially of fatty and salty food, according to Duque.

"Since it's the holidays and there are so many parties, people should think twice before eating delicious but unhealthy food," he said, noting that cardiovascular problems were common among Filipinos.

"The problem is they might end up in the hospital ICU [intensive care unit]," he added.

Atherosclerosis, the stiffening and thickening of blood vessel-like fatty in arteries or a heart attack, is triggered by risk factors like smoking and obesity.

Over the years, vessels and arteries are clogged by chronic intake of fatty and fatty food.

FEMALE SANTAS
Female dancers clad in Santa Claus costumes greet visitors at an amusement park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. (INQUIRER)

Gloria approves P700M in new defense contracts

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has approved three contracts worth P707 million to upgrade five Navy ships and two aircraft, the Department of National Defense announced yesterday.

It was the first batch of defense contracts that the approved as acting defense secretary.

Ms Arroyo took over the department last Nov. 20 when Her former chief legal counsel Avelino Cruz Jr. resigned after disagreeing with Malacañang's reorganization to amend the Constitution before the May 2007 elections.

In his two-year stay in the DND, Cruz has put in place a long-term Philippine Defense Reform Program that has progressed the acquisition and upgrade of "minimum essential" military equipment for the next 10 years.

Ms Arroyo has said she will remain as acting defense secretary for at least 60 days before the appointment of a replacement.

The approved contracts, worth P707,344,569, were meant to upgrade three Jacinto-class patrol vessels, two Parrot Killer Medium gunboats and two Alcione Surveillance aircraft, according to the DND.

The contract to upgrade the three Jacinto-class patrol vessels cost P524.6 million. The bidding was held in October last year, which SF One Co. Ltd. won. The construction company will do the repair at its shipyard in Lapas Lapas, Iloilo.

The contract to upgrade the two gunboats was awarded to Propmech Corp. for P282 million. The bidding was held in November last year. It was awarded to Propmech Corp.

Meanwhile, the bidding for the upgrade of the BO Islander aircraft was held in March this year. It was awarded to Hyadaw Pacific Plc for P71.5 million.

Ms Arroyo was expected to announce the approval of the contracts during the Armed Forces of the Philippines' anniversary this Dec. 21.

Instead, she announced that she has appointed former Navy chief Mateo Mayuga, former AFP Southern Luzon Command chief Pedro Cabuay and Reserve under-secretary Isidoro Tan to the rank from that will oversee the procurement of military equipment.

30 poachers from China arrested

GOD' VESITE LIM, LAGUNA—SUTSORTED four armed 30 Chinese poachers who were caught illegally fishing in Philippine waters off the world-famous Tubbataha Reef in southern Palawan on Thursday, police said Saturday.

Chief Supt. Napoleon Carlomia, Mimaropa police director, said Coast Guard and Navy personnel arrested the Chinese fishermen at around 2:30 p.m. on Thursday while they were fishing inside the protected Tubbataha Reef.

The Chinese were reportedly caught with 300 pieces of live "taotaong," a rare protected fish species.

Carlomia could not give other details of the arrest as the Chinese nationals were still being held by the arresting officers in one of the atolls of Tubbataha.

Marlen Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 24, 2006
4th Sunday of Advent
1st Reading: Micah 5: 1-4
Ruler of Israel

The Lord says this: "You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, so small that you are hardly named among the clans of Judah, from you shall I raise the one who is to rule over Israel. We his origins from of old, from the ancient times. Therefore, will abandon Israel until such time as she who is to give birth has given birth. Then the rest of his departed brothers will return to the people of Israel.

He will stand and shepherd his flock with the strength of Yahweh, in the glorious Name of Yahweh, his God. They will live safely, while he will be present to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace."

When the Anointed enters our land
and sets foot on our territory
we will raise against him
seven war-lord seven shepherds,
eight counsellors.

2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10
I will do your will

This is why on entering the world, Christ says: Sacrifice and denied sacrifice and offerings you never can pleased with sacrifices and offerings. Then I said, "Here I am. It was written of me in the scroll, I will do your will, O God."

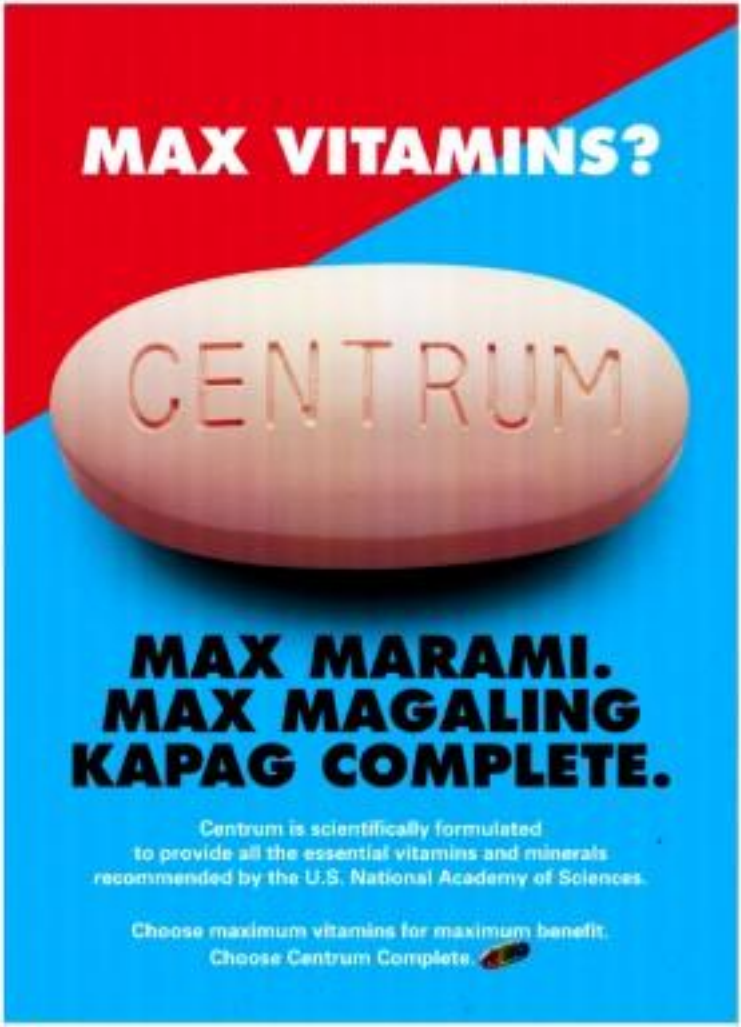
First he says: Sacrifices, offerings, burnt-offerings and sin offerings you did not desire nor were you pleased with them although they were required by the Law. Then he says: Here I am to do your will.

This is enough to nullify the first will and establish the new. Now, by that will of God, we are sanctified at once by the sacrifice of the body of Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45
Mother of the Lord

Mary then set out in a hurry for the hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and gave a loud cry and said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

Commentary:
At Bethlehem, the least will be the home of the One who will be ruler, who is from of old, who is the shepherd, the reconciler who will bring them home and let them remain secure. His name shall be peace! This is the one who will do the will of God. The only sacrifice God has ever wanted: obedience, give me flesh. And Mary goes to them in Judah, greets Elizabeth and she is recognized by her greeting ("of peace"). The Spirit surges from the blessed one leaps upon Elizabeth and cries. John even kicking unborn (p). Mary is blessed for trusting in the Lord's words to her. We are blessed in trusting God's words are still life! Word takes on our flesh this year! Will we obey and give our bodies, and Jesus to double sacrifice?



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Giving

EDITORIALS

AMIDST FROM GIVING IN THIS SEASON OF SHARING, it may do us well to remember that giving can also have disastrous consequences. Some forms of giving tend to develop in the receivers a mind-set of dependence, or even worse, a culture of mendicancy—which is among the worst things one can do to a person's dignity. The first we often see in overly caring senior parents practically "raising" the families of their adult children and in many a troubled OFW family. Of the second, well, we don't have to look far beyond the streets of Metro Manila to find examples.

Even so, it is not just the character of the receiver that giving could put in jeopardy. A former UP professor once cautioned a group of social workers with these words: "Being at the giving end could be as destructive as being at the receiving end." Illuminating, he said that one of the problems with being at the giving end for a long time is the sense of self-importance, the air of superiority that could eventually develop through constantly having so many of the less fortunate "depending" on them. If "charity workers" and donors are not careful, they could fall into this dangerous hole, and giving then becomes a kind of egotrip and a means for personal gratification. In other words, the self, not the receivers' needs, becomes the giver's primary concern, which makes the giving short-circuited.

To be sure, the Child Jesus did not envision that kind of giving. Neither that kind of giving that is not complete unless the name of the giver are made known—like the ones often done in relief operations by politicians and would-be candidates—nor the one where the giver expects something in return, whether in the form of gifts, favors or contracts.

The giving that Christ taught is self-effacing, in its highest Christian sense, it empowers; more specifically, it looks forward to the receivers themselves ultimately becoming givers as well. Put another way, the best Santa Claus is the one who would make of his receivers new Santa Clauses, such as a philanthropist who sponsors scholarships for indigent students.

This is the giving that's inspired by Christ. It resembles both the giver and receiver, more than it gratifies one's worldly pride.

Receiving

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES should not request nor accept any form of gifts or favors this holiday season, especially if they come from suppliers, contractors and clients."

When Deshadharan Merceditas Gutierrez issued this warning last Dec. 18, she probably had in mind the thousands, even millions, of Christmas gifts going in the direction of government officials and employees during this Christmas season. She could not have meant that after the "holiday season," they may ask for or accept gifts. After all, the license only ran until that the country's anticorruption law must apply equally to all and in all seasons.

Her statement makes us wonder what the reason to achieve. Did she mean to strike fear in the hearts of the usual bribe-takers and stop corruption in government? Or did she mean to assure the public that she is hell-bent on doing her duty? Or was she just performing an act because she felt the ombudsman had to say something about government people accepting gifts in this season of giving?

Still, the warning sounds strange, coming from someone who doesn't seem to care that P728 million in public funds marked for the purchase of fertilizers ended up in the wrong pockets, or that around P3 billion in public money intended for poll automation went down the drain. If the ombudsman believes as if she were powerless to act on these two well-documented scams, what makes her think that she could go after thousands of public servants who received "unsolicited" gifts "from suppliers, contractors and clients"?

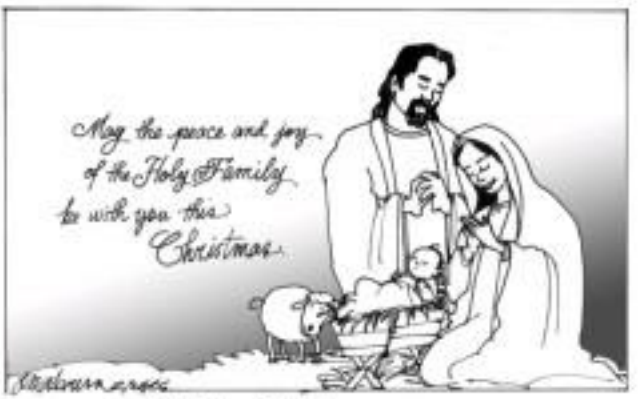
We will believe the ombudsman if the next time she issues a statement to the press she will order the arrest of everyone who sent her gifts. After all, the bribe-giver is as guilty as the bribe-taker, right?

Publisher **Isaac Tiglao**
Editor in Chief/CEO **Isabel Pamintuan**
Managing Editor **Jose Ma. D. Regalado**
Associate Editor **Rolando O. Tolentino**
Assistant Editor for Special Projects **Rosalio A. Ecleo Jr.**
Assistant Editor **Antonio T. Enriquez Jr.** • Chief, News Day Desk **Ma. G. Pacheco**
Opinion Editor **Juan V. Arcos**
Assistant Editor **Francisco S. Sumulong Jr.**
Senior Desk Editor **Jose P. Sonido Jr.**
Editor at Literature **Antonio Enriquez**
Chief Photographer **Ernie S. Esperas** Jr.
Art & Design Director **Grace A. Velasco**

Board of Chairman **Hans M. Pestaño**
President **Rosalinda Pineda Ampalayo**
Executive Vice President **Dina G. Nuyda**
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing **Rizal G. Ramos**
Vice President for Advertising **Ruth K. Guiao**
Vice President for Finance **Josefa Jacinta R. Tee**

Business Manager **Lorna Kalaw Tan**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.



Making Christmas merry

SEPARATE OPINION

Dagohoy A. Cruz

CHRISTMAS WILL BE CELEBRATED TOMORROW not only by the Christians but also by people of other faiths like the Muslims, the Jews, the Buddhists, the followers of Hare Krishna and the diverse worshipers of the same God albeit with different names. In this new global community, even pagans are joining in the festivities although without the religiosity inspired by the Nativity in the hills of Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago.

Such religiosity is no longer felt even among most of the Christian world today except for the singers of the holy psalms and the devout parishioners in ancient basilicas like ours who still feel the old reverence for the Almighty. In this more modern age, many people only observe or faith means Christmas Anniversary or only an ordinary holiday like a College Anniversary or Araw ng Kagitingan to be observed with civic solemnities but not spiritual fervor.

The true meaning of Christmas is not felt by the young children who identify it not with the Holy Infant but with Santa Claus as the bearer of gifts. It is only when they grow older that they will recognize the virtue and power of prayer as the invisible link between Heaven and Earth, more so of the disciples and said, "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God." They are the naive and unpretending believers for, by some of them, only as long as they remain young.

The trouble is that little children grow to mature persons, and the birth of their earlier years may be challenged by adult uncertainties. Their innocent ideas are ruined by serious inquiries that may turn into doubt and become disbelief and sometimes even sacrilege. This is when loss happened to some Christian diaspora, as to speak, when more Christians in overseas areas are of apostate and not sincere and not of thanksgiving to Divine Providence.

Christmas is now more a season for commercial exploitation than a religious event glorifying the Lord. It is the excuse of the merchants to play all unbelievable gifts, from toys for the children, jewelry and perfume for the women, bulbs for bringing bellies and drooping pants, to last resources for building trees. Advertisers set like carnival barkers yelling SALE! SALE! SALE! of everything everywhere for everyone. Prayers are forgotten in the furious shopping for holiday presents.

It is regrettable that many people now regard Christmas only as an occasion for gift-giving, either voluntary or mostly obligatory. Still the traditional sense for the exchange of love and friendship, it means now to many crimes only as a license necessarily to give as a social duty.

Nevertheless appreciate the chance to express their feelings with tokens of affection as they can afford, whether it be a simple greeting card or a condominium, a romantic kiss or, of course, the least expensive and the most persuasive, that there are those for whom giving is a compulsion that mars the sensibility of what is there to a bothersome. Pakelde. They are the ones who give and from the heart but from the smiles.

The practice now is to remember not only those we sincerely appreciate but also those merely harmless persons, like messengers and security guards, who expect some thanks for their usual unnecessary services or small favors. I do not begrudge them the little tokens of gratitude they hope for, but I am thinking of many deserving beneficiaries of our generosity during this season of goodwill.

I write to the Milroys in Central Luzon and the recent beating in the Bicol region that destroyed thousand hectares of people, destroyed their houses, flooded their farms, and saw their happiness shattered by the angry winds. These suddenly dispossessed casualties are facing a bleak future and a particularly dreary one. Christmas: big tomorrows. It is they for whom that very anticipation is a compulsory kindness that they desperately need for their survival.

Without our compassion, they will not feel the serenity of the usually happy time that unites our nation in veneration of the babe in the manger, at least for one reverent day. Without our compassion, those helpless people suffered by the howling vampires can never see unity restoration, in sadness and perhaps bitterness, the last peace and contentment of their stricken lives. Unless we help them.

We can make their misfortune more bearable during that festive time for most of us but not for them. By reminding to them the manner of assistance to fill their needs and heal their wounds, we can help their sense at least some of the Christmas benefits we enjoy in full and even abundant measure. By being kind to them in their loneliness, we can make our own Christmas more meaningful as our humble obedience to the message the choir of angels sang in Bethlehem.

The Inquirer has started a fund drive for the victims of the typhoon victims, and we are hoping all of us will support it with what little (or the most) we can give them in food, clothes, cash and toys. We can make tomorrow a Merry Christmas for them as it will also be especially for us, remembering the Savior's comforting words that "whatever you have done unto the least of these, you have done unto me."

Merry Yuletide greetings to one and all!

Focus

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

"FOR BEHOLD I AM THE DOMESTIC "SOYOS hangs?" whenever they meet each other. I spent four years in Korea as a missionary, and the first time somebody greeted me that way I responded, "Gamsha ni da!"

It's Christmas once again, and let me greet you today "Anyong hasseo!" (I mean "Are you at peace?" My wish is that you are at peace, especially this Christmas. In spite of problems and crises, I wish you and your family are country and our world true peace.

* * *

In many ways, peace really depends much on what is inside you. In today's Gospel (Lk. 1, 39-45) we hear of two pregnant women, Mary and Elizabeth, sharing their peace and joy with each other. In spite of the difficult situation they were in. One conceived in questionable circumstances, and the other was pregnant in her old age. They had their worries and concerns, but they focused on gratitude and praise.

How you feel at Christmas really depends much upon you and your focus. Like Mary and Elizabeth, let us fill up our thanksgiving to the Lord.

* * *

No matter what, and no matter how valid your concerns are, hey, it's Christmas, and you, are still here, and you are still alive. Isn't that a blessing in itself? Think about it. There were people who were with you last Christmas and are no longer with you now. It means you are still allowed to live by God. But what sort of a life are you living? It also means that you still have a mission in life. But are doing your mission in life?

* * *

If there is no peace in your heart, maybe you focused more on the "activity score" (what or the Nativity scene. Instead of focusing on the material trimmings that go along with our Christmas celebration, focus on the parents that surrounded. Just did not dampen the spirit of the first Christmas. There was peace in spite of the deprivations, because there was God. Find time today to look away from the "activity score" and spend time somewhere on the Nativity scene, and you will find peace.

* * *

A Nativity scene moment dawned on me one morning when I said goodbye to the driver who helped me during my stay in Cebu. As he said, "Merry Christmas, Padre!" I smiled, too, wanting to convert his pronunciation, but at that very moment the real meaning of Christmas struck me. The first Christmas was Mama Mary's Christmas. It was simple, peaceful, joyful and hopeful. Mary just focused on the Child, not on the grim circumstances that surrounded them.

More than a merry Christmas, may we all experience a Mary Christmas. Pls. Let us not be spoiler-brats this Christmas. Let us open our hearts, our minds and our pockets especially this Christmas.

* * *

Parents, who feel that they cannot and are not giving enough to their children should remember that Mary and Joseph, too, did not have presents for the Child like the "three Kings" had, but they were present to Him. More than your presents, it is your loving happy presence that really matters most in the lives of your children.

* * *

Mary and Elizabeth teach us about trust. They were simple, humble women who believed and trusted that God's promise to them will be fulfilled, in spite of all the odds. They held on to God's power and God's word, and that's why they were blessed. Those who rely on their own power and trust in their own riches will never be truly blessed. Oh mire, they can have their cake and even eat it, too, but they will never have peace, and will not even rest in peace. Christmas reminds us to go back to the basic truth that without God, without humility, without truth, without contentedness, without love, we can never have peace.

* * *

Christmas is all about "Noel" ("God is with us"). The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. It is for us as we make his presence and love felt, then we make Christmas happen again. Yes, we all must be busy spreading the good news and perpetuating the values of the Kingdom of God. Too bad some people are so busy with their "Noel" (an election) agenda, forgetting God's agenda even as Christmas. Let us all pray for real and lasting character change. Let us put God's agenda over and above our own personal agenda. Let us help build God's kingdom in this world and forget building and perpetuating our own kingdoms.

* * *

Our Christ the King Seminary Chapel will be consecrated as a Shrine of the Divine Word on Christmas Day. Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, D.D. will be the main celebrant in the 10 a.m. Mass. May this Divine Word be internalized in our hearts and in the hearts of all Mary Christians everyone!

* * *

Always remember that God only makes happy endings. If it's not happy, then it's not yet the end. If you're in a struggle, take courage for it's not done yet. Trust and wait, and strengthen your faith and pray. Get daily suggestions of prayer, text OH PRAYER to 2044 for Globe/Yuza or 0906 for Smart.

God bless you, Manila Mary loves you!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to stay focused on the Nativity scene instead of the "activity score." Amen.

Looking good and feeling young at 75

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

FOR THE FIRST TEN WEEKS, I HAVE BEEN meeting interviewers from practically friendly newspapers. Today, I was reminded of my old saying that this school year of being 75 is the one to be. My birthday is next week. Unfortunately, four days ago, our baby maid Adelfa left us to enter the convent. At age 75, Nelia Mendiola became president of Manila Tytana after 27 years spent in prison on Mindoro Island. Which reminds me of the time I was incapable of doing at a time when some of us met for checking our funeral arrangements which were paid by many years ago.

• • •

In 1947, Samuel E. Gleeson was one of 20 Philippine boy scouts who were sent to the 6th World Jamboree in Moisson, France. It was the first post-World War II forum Southeast and Indonesia to a ceremony in the presence of Baron Heyne in the Philippine delegation.

The ten-voyage from Singapore to Brindisi, across the Suez Canal, through the Mediterranean, to England was aboard the Empress of Scotland, a converted troopship. One-third of the ship was reserved for the Philippine delegation. Sam Gleeson, who had the other half was for young passengers. The ocean was rough and the soldiers lost were allowed to come all over the ship.

Gleeson recalls that the Jamboree in France was held in the Bois de Vincennes, some 90,000 boy scouts from all over the world gathered just two years after the worst conflict in the history of mankind. The wedding, which they witnessed for the event, was an interest for with the crowds in the streets of Paris. Sam Gleeson was chosen by Mel Brother's to them. Mission often wondered why the mission had to go so was over-Millionaires.

Some neighbour, they were crowned like heroes, with parades held in their honor. Flying to Loyal Paradise Elysée Palace. Upon arrival in the city of Paradise Elysée Palace. Upon arrival in the city an event. Quinter sets doubtboarded to realize that the embarrassing crowd was for the boy scouts and that he was just a neglected bystander.

But more than the fact that he is one of the country's top professionals in a highly competitive environment, perhaps his greatest claim to fame these days is that he is being the proud grandfather of Ariel, son of the latter-spent chapter in the season's today.

• • •

Cesar Emilio Aguinaldo Veras will be remembered by the country's first prime minister and concession minister of finance from 1981 to 1986. I will always remember him as the only high government official who visited his own hometown even while wearing the long-lasting arrival honors being bestowed by a visiting country star. Cesar, my daughter Jennifer Bennett to any of the current regime in the 4D of prime ministers carrying their own name for center.

As one who served under him for many years in a difficult position, I will also remember Cesar as the Boss who never lost his temper. He was the one person who would scratch his head or his ears repeatedly to indicate disconcertion with your work or your answers.

At 22, Veras graduated from the University of the Philippines with two degrees, AB in Medieval Engineering and standard in Business Administration (cum laude). Right years later, he would be dean of the College of Business Administration, and at age 40, the youngest secretary of finance in the Philippines, a post he held for seven years.

If you are a senior citizen, don't let his age fool you. He plays as hard as he works.

• • •

Finally, my favorite travel secretary, Jimmy Paz, who also just turned 75, is the one who first drew me into advertising as a young cadet.

Paz, on a sailing boat, you will be cured with the sweetest and children.

Second, you will probably be running for him to be released if you are not of no interest about the season.

Third, you can tell your friends the same jokes over and over and over again.

A blessed Christmas to all!

Gifts of the season

AT LARGE

Elena Aparicio-David

I THOUGHT THAT THE WORLD HAVE A HARD time finding the good spirits to celebrate the season. Last year's holidays were shadowed by the death of my father-in-law, Nestor Mata, in January and in August this year, my eldest brother, Benjamin Rivera. Two days after Nestor's passing, my husband's sister Nene also passed away after a long battle with cancer.

It had seemed we would not push through the bitterness of the year, and finding the good cheer and exuberance to see us through the holidays would be like something upon a new story was in a Dickensian Christmas tale—gone in a wisp and forgotten! Fittingly, such other words may aren't even looking for them. These, that have been the best gifts of the year (one—gift of people, space matters, new chapters, new years.

Let's start with the gift of time. Time is precious, a priest, who came to our family during Nestor's health crisis. Fr. Bobby Dizon, SJD, was a missionary in Brazil for many years before he was re-assigned to the Philippines to take up an assignment in Radio Veritas. Bobby was also one of the celebrants at Nestor's funeral Mass. Before the Mass, he was in the sacristy as he met my sister-in-law Connie Jumaquio. It was Father who divided Bobby Dizon to my Mass in the hospital where Nene languished for me.

Connie told Father Bobby that Nene is a retired personnel in our firm, especially during the trades and learned the Nene when he volunteered to organize the Masses and presided over the funeral Mass himself.

I was especially touched when Father Bobby told, during one of his Masses, that the trial to canonized is marked by the gradual loosening of family ties, because a priest, especially a missionary, should be free to go anywhere he is needed. Father Bobby carrying in New York in that time, Father Bobby said he was told we glad to stop into his church, since it was only eight days to NYPD confirmation and he needed candidates for confirmation.

And indeed, Father Bobby has since become part of the family. Whenever she seemed he is again a person itself, he becomes a regular "tag-along" para pamisan. On special occasions, he joins our

of his way to grant family members, especially those whom he feels need a caring word, consoling gesture. He has only been a "job" to the time, a value we needed someone like him the most.

• • •

THE FIRST TEN months, my husband Ibe and I have also been embroiled in a project we call "the Benjamin book," a compilation of stories and anecdotes on my maternal side of the family. My mother is one of four thousand of our forebears of Bambino, Pangasinan.

To facilitate communication, because none of my cousins and aunts or uncles are now based in the United States, we resorted to e-mailing and this is where the fun of "our hometown" e-mail groups, meanwhile, has also allowed us to celebrate birthday greetings and of course birthday wishes—serving a present day need now as our ancestors were long ago.

Plans are fine, keeps planning the book, an incredible five years ago, we thought the project would be very safe to get used to in our town. It's just the cost for life and history, this we are finding out that it has also helped us to connect, re-building ties that we had allowed to slacken, cementing relations that had some-

lost lustre/coolness.

What a blessing the book project has turned out to be! Now, if only people would heed the deadlines.

• • •

Still from my cousin Dr. Butch Bragunia in New Jersey, who has his wife Rose to prepare copies of the book, is the hottest gift of tonight, when he sends the message e-mail:

"We took all of you a VERY BRIEF CHEST MRI and ABDOMEN SCAN.

"Although that is an unusually new life for us, we were relieved by the fact that we found no other than the 6 teeth OUR LIVES. What picture to send on eclipse this?"

Indeed, it is all a matter of perspective, and of realizing that even perhaps deliberately spoiled with one or two of a family, it is more than enough to be grateful for the gift of life and lingering memories.

And from me to you, this gift: a passage from an unlikely source, the book "In the Company of Cheerful Ladies" by Alexander McCall Smith, who seems to have a better chance for the last Saturday in Botswana by the name of Precious Ramotswe. Early in the book, Madame Ramotswe reveals Sunday service and the pastor delivers a moving message on the importance of this one day in part:

"And so it is with Christmas. We have to make it special, so that there can be something to look forward to while we claim to be celebrating an event. But the more we think about that memory, the more we realize that it is not the world, then, having no dependency and boldness on our own part, we discover by what it is, in being reminding that we simply cannot understand. And that does not mean that we have any children, since the philosophy that we have no one can be absolutely about the suffering and the pain of the world. But we can do something about it, and all of us in this place must. But to be chosen to do something, even from yourself doing, to diminish the volume of suffering in the world. Or can do that by any of kindness or others; we can do that by relieving their pain."

After writing others alone in our jar to understand the human ones, but also to transcend it and give it meaning. A meaningful Christmas to you all!

Changing our priorities

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS, SAYS THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, is not Charter change but character change. I think what we need most is neither Charter change nor character change, but a change in our priorities—a change that reflects a greater resolve to put our national destiny in our hands rather than leave it to the mercy of events.

Proponents of Charter change say we need this so that we can "fix" the many problems that afflict the country. They could tell us what is so wrong with our present Constitution that it cannot be changed without a constitutional convention to the name of efficiency. We have just seen what an "efficient" unicameral legislature can do to the Anti-Terror Law—it rushes something. Do we really want the kind of efficiency that is achieved at the cost of democracy?

On the other hand, the bishops have called for short-term change. This call is too general to have any compelling value; it has coalesced a hodgepodge.

Character germs to me of the life of a person or of a people. It is the product of many convergencies. It is not something one freely chooses. But, character needs not be destiny. Long-term changes in character can be brought about by conscious, deliberate and collective and understanding, with determination and effort, a nation may be able to overcome fatal what it has become to its surrounding its processes. Could this be what the bishops mean when they called for character change?

I believe it is easier to consider change when it is defined in terms of deliberately taking hold of one's destiny, instead of letting chance decide for us. Consider, for example, what a revolutionary for our country if we deliberately pursued:

1. Electoral reform that works
2. Armed reform over counter insurgency
3. Ecological management over economic exploitation
4. Social equity over counter insurgency

5. Political literacy over national security
6. Poverty reduction over military expenditures
7. Self-reliance over dependence on foreign assistance
8. Decentralization over centralization
9. National development over global integration
10. Human development over economic growth

What reversal amendment means done that in a short is not a matter of whether Congress or people between two sets of rubber. Changes in procedure do not just happen, they are fought for in the political arena over a long period. But, even though they are political questions, their resolution is shaped by the moral and ideological concepts that animate the people. Ideology is the cement that binds the citizens by rules or reasons. Some will gain from or benefit; others will sacrifice or fight.

Pope Benedict XVI is quite emphatic in saying that the Church itself must not enlist up the political battle that is the task of the state, but he also makes the message that it must remain in the debate.

In his first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est," a highly recent document, he states: "But the Church's love is also her gift through refusal to participate and the lost to surrender to the spiritual urge without which charity would become merely another agency of social assistance, almost personal and passive. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. But the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply."

"The just ordering of society and the State is a central responsibility of politics. We can also say, in one sad, close which is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves. Human [unintelligible] save upon strict regard for justice! . . . Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are governed in justice, since by its very nature it has to do with ethics. . . . But . . . what is justice? The problem is one of practical reason, but if reason is to be exercised properly, it must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely blind to the dangers arising from moral blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests."

Clearly, the problem of my State are obviously to be redressed in terms of how well they can be addressed by the moral and political and just measure of the common good. But what is a matter for the people themselves to decide. "The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful," says Benedict XVI.

From this standpoint, the present rally in the Luneta that will be held by my own wife may be a place to look if our not hoping for a political event to happen. Those who genuinely wish to empower the Benedict's challenge in the laity to be active politically might want to take a look at the whole picture of the political landscape, unfortunately, [unintelligible] look out the other day in the Inquirer (1/2/2005, P.18). This new party drives heavily from the Church's social teachings in defining its stand on the moral issues facing our society today. It aims to field candidates in the 2007 elections, but in the meantime it intends to immediately take the moral pulse of Philippine politics and governance.

Mary Christmas!

• • •

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

And so this is Christmas

I HAVEN'T BEEN STUCK IN MALAY TRAFFIC FOR almost a year. Why sit on the backseat of a taxi and just changing lanes to see an hour and a half, when you can stay in your house or in the office? But here I am, a few nights before Christmas, sapping my brain while creating shopping on my friend David's car, listening to love-you-phonophiles over angel Locsin's Tinsel Bellhead. It is 6:30, and our dreams were set at 8. My boys get behind it on the backseat, whooping it up.

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

"Let's remember Emily herself with our gas-spattered eyes for Emily.

It's a long way, past chaos on roadways, past flatulence, past a series of shrug-yeah hand with wrinkles and sun-sunsuns by an with single-strings of colored lights. He make it up the hill and we're in the second door of the office. David said I have had a total of three appearances (involving graphic design, racial discrimination and urban flash it is that we happy or hey-eyes.

There is Christmas table and a few chairs, a leather couches from of the TV and a bookshelf unevenly filled with plaster-of-paris angels and old issues. There are newspapers on a folder by the couch and a chess set on the table. No Christmas tree, no candles, no colored lights and holly-mistletoe, but it is Christmas in the room, and I think, just as I'm supplied in a bag from an old restaurant, that's what I grew up for.

There are changes. There's a new couple sitting on the couch; the boy we thought would never notice gets a holding hands with he the girl we thought was too smart to boot up with a boy. Our longhaired Rommel is in chess-ics and preppy. Our cat is in and lost five silver months from higher studies, about to graduate with honors. Our boys with cousins are still planning that Gina Pati Pina is now but not possible to the Guardian Duplicate. Our sister got a man and so she mentioned who were quite a Beatles lawyer. There is a baby on the way, the first one in our group of old, old friends, which is why "Rockabye Baby" is playing on the stereo and "Away in a Manger" and "Lullaby for Children" were interrupted on a pile of Christmas wrapping paper. The expectant couple is coming over for will come back to live person. His father is over he will be speaking Baton Rouge by 8, his mother claims he will be on without prodigy, and the rest of us make inner promises we don't really set out best to protect the poor baby from parental insanity.

For once there is enough food for everyone—nothing like the phone grabbing, eyes-searching for boxes to hoarding meals back in college. There is homemade spot chicken from our mother-in-law, and there is pancit and lumpia and tons from made in entire two hours after we discovered the pancit-ing on the plastic containers.

They say that conversation will only peak in the room, so the guessing I will find friends are more cool than close friends. By the end of lunch, I realized why the morning's holy terrible: it's rich, it's overly-sweet, it's filled with memories that are taking, and the much breakfast ones, are asked if they know they were younger than ownership today.

And although name-calling and old issues are dredged up and unpardonable again, there are certain things that never change. We are right where we were, sitting on the floor and drawn with the playing-card rules, and although I have grown to memorize all clichés, I can find no other word to describe less than "pleasing." Her smile from our end of the room as the other, telling they jokes and giving away presents. Jokes we've heard a million times, but still we laugh like fools as the jokes are inevitably said again. "I'm I'm pound-heavy now." He shakes his head, smiles the moment-old smile that has drawn of girls and boys at his bar. His right hand on down, and her husband beams in her from across the room.

Gifts are passed around, and my brown hands that tie bows in their shirts. They do, reluctantly, and we find out why. Each boy is assigned one of their t-shirts and shorts, and there are things picking out that because our supposed to have picking out, as one boy demonstrates by wrapping his arms around his chest. "This the drawer for!" exclaims the former. The boy protests, but the right answer is the unrehearsed outrage, answers in cast. "It's a shirt, who cares about the drawer if it doesn't fit?" So is the point with the new we've gained as said home and familiar and loves me, the boys watch them, although our pal watch the rip with pure boys home carrying for with gusto.

Things we would have never found funny before are unconditionally hilarious on date night before Christmas. Our friend Trish from Britain tells us that her Romance in Manchester meant the touch of Christmas at one working their own joints of drinks, and we laughed at a company party where a drunk star fired egg is actually the Philippines' national fish. There is talk of fashion for summer and apartment physics, pool rooms and the Kabal Series.

I hear old rumors. I've never heard before. Each others are come still debating. The cold, and of the Beatles, Mark walked into the room and I was in the good looking boy in book, and found my takeout pals coming on my desk. He got friend found him starring intensely at the pouch-colored pillow the pale, pulling at them and something by hand. Tonight, I don't even have room to think, because but, it's Christmas, and I have don't want to miss out of supposed to that'll be ready whenever in the morning and the laughing stop.

Happy holidays.

• • •

For someone, just sure ARE ARMS some ago, heaven messages that send to [illegible] Globe this and Smart for Texts. E-mail at pat.evangelista@gmail.com

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to: [illegible]

Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

A COMMITTEE TO REVIEW the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP) was constituted by UP President Emerlinda Roman in July 2006 following the submission of a study conducted by an ad hoc committee formed in 2005 to review tuition and other fees in the university.

In its report, the ad hoc committee noted that since 1999, when tuition in UP was adjusted to levels P1500 and P2000 per unit for Diploma and regional campuses, respectively) at an with State policy calling to comparable private and excellent in the country and a program of socialized tuition discount based on ability to pay was introduced, the university had not adjusted its fee structure in the face of rising price inflation.

This situation has resulted in the erosion of the real value of tuition to just one-third of its 1999 level, while more or less maintaining the basic threshold on average. Consequently, students who are in a position to shoulder the full cost of a UP education have been able enjoy an unintended subsidy at the same time that students deserving of financial assistance under the university's STFAP have had to make do with stipends greatly reduced in real value by inflation.

Incoming freshmen

Thus, the ad hoc committee recommended raising the undergraduate base tuition from P500 to P1,000 per unit on the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses and from P1,000 to P500 per unit in Baguio and the Visayas and Mindanao units. New students in Iloilo effect in June 2007 would pay the incoming freshmen, the proposed adjustment attempt to nearly restore the unit value of UP's tuition to the level which it had already been deemed reasonable in 1999.

The committee also recommended an increase in prevailing miscellaneous fees charged by the university units in order to help defray the more important recurring costs incurred by the university, namely, electricity, maintenance of the physical infrastructure, and the university library's book and serial subscriptions.

University policy

The committee and others few or zero consumers, moreover, recommended the continuation of the university policy to assess [subsidies of] UP students' [a] demand family income of equal or less than, or greater than the basic [or inflation-adjusted] tuition in keeping with the principle that "students who can afford [it] should pay at least the full cost of their UP education in addition, and students other classes should be granted subsidies from the fees of [discount in tuition and other fees, book allowance and monthly stipends."

Specifically, the committee recommended the reduction in the number of STFAP brackets from nine to five, the consequent increase of the amount projected to P12,000, and the designation of a special bracket for students coming from families that belong to the richest percentile in the income distribution, who will be denied or among entering freshmen. Students assigned to the five brackets shall be charged 1-5 times the base tuition.

The ad hoc committee also recommended a triennial review and readjustment of the base tuition with reference to which the assignment of discounts and the coverage of stipends that the university may be willing to offer in the future can be determined.

New tuition structure

Table 1 summarizes the key the name of the new (as proposed) tuition structure in comparison with those of the existing one.

As proposed by the ad hoc committee, students assigned to the five brackets shall be charged 1-5 times the base tuition.

The ad hoc committee also recommended a triennial review and readjustment of the base tuition with reference to which the assignment of discounts and the coverage of stipends that the university may be willing to offer in the future can be determined.

Table 1. Existing and proposed tuition fee structure

Feature	Present	Proposed
Base tuition	P1,000 per unit*	P500 per unit**
Number of STFAP brackets	5 (1 non-paying)	9 (5 nonpaying)
Tuition discounts	100, 70, 40 percent	100, 75, 50, 25 percent
Stipend per semester	P12,000	P6,750***
Highest income bracket tuition	1.5 times the base tuition	Base tuition

* Applicable fees in Baguio, San Fernando, Visayas and Mindanao are 50 percent of this.

** Applicable fee in Los Baños is P250 per unit, while P300 for other regional units.

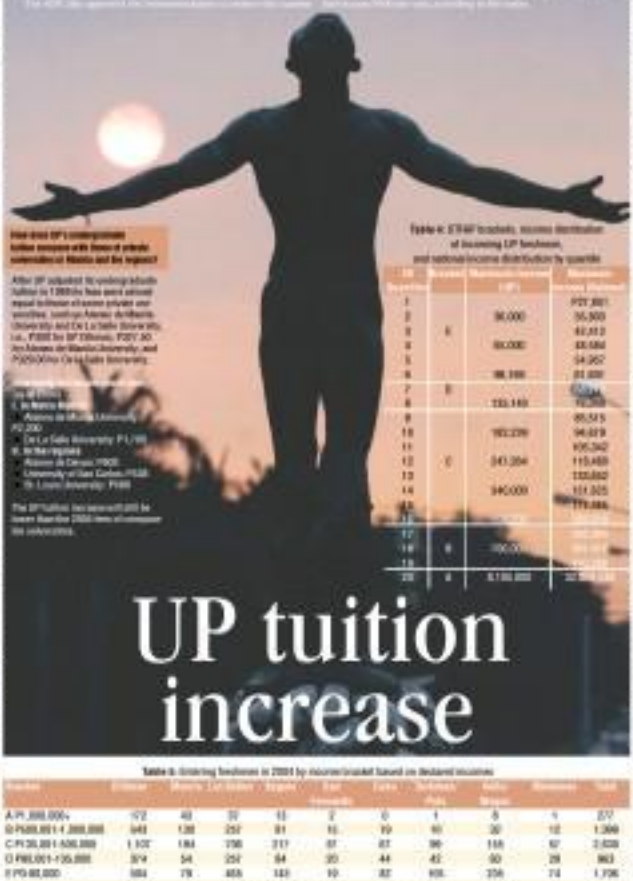
*** This is an average for Brackets 1-4. The amount starts at P6,250 per semester for Bracket 1 and declines to P4,500 per semester for those in Bracket 4.

Table 2. STFAP alphabetic bracketing scheme

Bracket	Annual family income (in pesos)	Tuition discount	Stipend (per semester)
	Range	Group	
A	Greater than P1,200,000	P1,000	P1,000	N.A.
B	P600,001 – P1,200,000	P1,000	P900	N.A.
C	P120,001 – P600,000	P600	P400	N.A.
D	P60,001 – P120,000	P300	P200	N.A.
E	P60,000 or less	0	0	P12,000

Group I: Diliman, Manila, Los Baños

Group II: Baguio, Visayas, Mindanao



UP tuition increase

Table 3. Income distribution of incoming UP freshmen and national income distribution

Income bracket	Annual income of UP freshmen	Average income of UP freshmen	National income distribution	Average income of national income
Poorest	36,000	11,510	31,000	36,463
Second	66,000	32,197	46,000	43,304
Third	88,100	80,026	61,624	63,052
Fourth	139,140	110,219	76,240	88,863
Fifth	182,336	150,057	94,070	85,304
Sixth	247,264	215,472	118,400	106,029
Seventh	348,000	288,507	161,025	134,473
Eighth	508,000	417,122	205,349	170,764
Ninth	780,000	661,786	321,516	245,009
Richest	8,160,000	1,186,688	32,250,948	640,000

Table 4: STFAP brackets, income distribution of incoming UP freshmen, and national income distribution by quintile

Bracket	Annual family income (in pesos)	Tuition discount	Stipend (per semester)	Number of UP freshmen	Income quintile	Annual income (in pesos)	Number of families
A	Greater than P1,200,000	P1,000	P1,000	1			FIY 801
B	P600,001 – P1,200,000	P1,000	P900	2		36,000	55,000
C	P120,001 – P600,000	P600	P400	3	6		61,512
D	P60,001 – P120,000	P300	P200	4		66,000	69,584
E	P60,000 or less	0	P12,000	5			54,267
				6		88,100	61,000
				7	5		70,000
				8		133,140	72,000
				9			65,515
				10		182,336	94,619
				11			105,342
				12	4	247,264	115,469
				13			120,662
				14		348,000	101,305
				15			111,184
				16			
				17			
				18	3	780,000	
				19			
				20	2	8,160,000	20,000

Table 5: Entering freshmen in 2005 by income bracket based on declared incomes

Income bracket	Diliman	Manila	Los Baños	Baguio	Iloilo	Tacloban	Cebu	Davao	Cotabato	Total
							Visayas	Mindanao		
A P1,200,000+	172	40	31	13	2	0	1	5	1	277
B P600,001-1,200,000	648	138	257	81	11	19	10	30	12	1,399
C P120,001-600,000	1,107	184	198	217	37	37	36	118	57	2,038
D P60,001-120,000	374	54	257	64	20	44	43	90	28	963
E P60,000	384	78	859	183	10	82	105	256	74	1,736
Total	2,705	494	1,702	558	80	312	307	499	172	6,584

Flesh out mechanism

For reasons of vertical equity it should not be objectionable that the [subsidies] therefore [a] it being included to cover students from the richest percentile(s) who will be assigned to 5 (nonpaying) tuition—although the mechanism for implementing this needs fleshing out.

Table 4 illustrates that under the proposed STFAP, the distribution of tuition by quintiles, by a decent proportion of the national data is made, the highest income by base tuition in the UP system (at present) is P12,000, and the designation of a special bracket for students coming from families that belong to the richest percentile in the income distribution, who will be denied or among entering freshmen. Students assigned to the five brackets shall be charged 1-5 times the base tuition.

The ad hoc committee also recommended a triennial review and readjustment of the base tuition with reference to which the assignment of discounts and the coverage of stipends that the university may be willing to offer in the future can be determined.

Determining eligibility

The determination of whether a student qualifies for a tuition fee discount under STFAP is essentially a problem of determining whether the student's family income is above or below the threshold income as measured by family income statistics (the latter is low at bring to thirteen C, D or E).

The proposed is not understood or aware that families at the very least are willing to cooperate with the university in measuring their genuine ability to pay for UP tuition if anyone. It also intended that the university has the means to verify the information supplied given all the necessary safeguards against misleading applications to conceal or underreport their economic-and assets.

Source: Report of the Committee to Review the STFAP headed by Prof. Edgar Arnaiz of the UP College of Engineering.

It should be noted, however, that the income profile is based solely on students' declared incomes and that are likely to be understated.)

In fact, full cost tuition is really closer to P1,500 per unit, based on estimates of direct cost of undergraduate instruction at UP (Table 6, Report of ad hoc committee to review the socialized tuition and fees.) The implies that all but the richest 7.5 percent will continue to be subsidized by the state.)

Full discount, stipend

Bracket 5 students, who will enjoy full discount such a measure stipend, will comprise more than 50 percent, while a double percentage will be in Bracket 4 paying P500 per unit, then the richest 25 percent will actually be paying the full cost, the greater proportion—about 40 percent—will be paying P500 per unit, or double what they are currently paying.

Since the actual distribution of freshmen income may, however, be different from one year to the one depending on various factors (e.g., University of the Philippines Admissions Test passing rates, admissions, etc.), a better way to appreciate the core STFAP structure is to see how the proposed brackets map on to the national income distribution.

With the new STFAP bracketing scheme, students up to the fourth decile, along with some from the fifth (approximately the 42nd percentile of the national income distribution [refer to column 4], shall be realized to their tuitions and a stipend (Bracket E). Those coming from families in the top 10 to the 15th percentile shall be assigned to Bracket 4 with a 70-percent discount.

Bracket C with a 40-percent discount includes students from the seventh all the way up to the richest decile of the national distribution. That is because the entry point for UP students (columns 2 and 3) is markedly different from the entire national distribution (columns 6 and 7). Indeed, the top three income deciles in the UP student bracketing to the richest decile in the national distribution. In effect, UP students coming from families belong to the 97th percentile of the national income distribution (median annual family income of P500,000) shall continue to enjoy a relatively more generous subsidy than those coming from the near-affluent (middle or upper) to pay full cost or near-full cost tuition.

Determining eligibility

The determination of whether a student qualifies for a tuition fee discount under STFAP is essentially a problem of determining whether the student's family income is above or below the threshold income as measured by family income statistics (the latter is low at bring to thirteen C, D or E).

The proposed is not understood or aware that families at the very least are willing to cooperate with the university in measuring their genuine ability to pay for UP tuition if anyone. It also intended that the university has the means to verify the information supplied given all the necessary safeguards against misleading applications to conceal or underreport their economic-and assets.

Source: Report of the Committee to Review the STFAP headed by Prof. Edgar Arnaiz of the UP College of Engineering.

[author block]

Across the NATION

[author block]

Bong Pineda wife to run for governor

By Tarra Quismorio
Inquirer Central Luzon

BACOLOR, PAMPANGA—BOARD MEMBER LEIA Pineda said she would face off with reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid in the May 2007 elections so she could lead Pampanga, the home province of President Macapagal-Arroyo, out of Lapid's "poor leadership."

The governor's father, Jess, blamed "Tito" Lapid, who said to have been trying to seek a meeting with Pineda's husband, suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, in an apparent bid to talk her out of her gubernatorial plan.

Board Member Pineda said she has the blessing of the senator's supporter for a meeting but that her plan was here about to see her husband need not intervene.

The Lapids did not reply to inquiries seeking a confirmation of the supposed request.

Political observers and officials in the province said the looming fight between Lapid and Pineda would be mainly a battle of resources.

They said Lapid would be banking on show his popularity and fortune allegedly built from quarry money. They said Pineda, on the other hand, would rely on her husband's wealth, pasting traditions and influence.

The Lapids have not raised the looming issue against the Pinedas.

During the meeting Capalonganyan last year, in which relatives Bhilliamingo's have claimed Board Member Pineda handed money to election officials, Senator Lapid defended the board member from the accusations.

Bong Pineda had denied opening jueteng or owning a license for small-town lottery (STL). The Lapids had denied snatching themselves from allegedly stalling quarry taxes.

Pineda's political plan is seen as a result, in a sense, of the continuing campaign by several Pampanga anyone who backs alliance with the Lapids in November.

They moved to the Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi), Mr. Arroyo's political party, after the Lapids turned down a resolution by the Pampanga Mayors League to include last-term mayors in the slate of the administration Lakas-NUCD. Ex-board members, adopt non-Lakas mayors and vice in PML presidents and Lubao Mayor Dodo Pineda, the board member's son, as the governor's running mate.

Mayor Pineda has backtracked to give in to his mother's plan.

Board Member Pineda, 35, said she decided to run for governor after hearing the resentment and distaste of local officials and leaders of various sectors.

"They are dismayed by Lapid's lack of vision, his inability to manage, his insensitivity on health and other social services, his arrogance toward elected officials. Then there are issues about irregularities in development projects and quarry tax collections," Pineda told the Inquirer.

In Pineda's announcement here on Thursday, Mayors Francisco Lazatin of San Ana, Arthur Salalila of Sta. Rita, Ricardo Rivera of Guagua, Titos Lucanlas of Apalit, Romeo Dungca of Bacolor, Pastor Gaston of Magalang and Catalina Bugarin of Sasmuan took turns telling about they prefered to be the frontrunning of Lapid.

At least 1,000 village leaders attended the consultation.

The issues cited the mayors raised against Lapid were his mismanaging of the provincial development council where many on have a say on where the 20 percent development fund should be spent, the alleged irregularities in road-filling projects, quarry tax collections and contracts, and the supposed exclusion of the governor's mother, Marina, in the capitol's affairs and transactions.

Mayor Pineda disputed Lapid's "replacement (pro-poor)" image in politics and in the service.

"It's a myth. If he was really pro-poor, why did he allow P100 million worth of road-filling projects to become ghost projects? Why has he not used the funds for medical assistance?" Mayor Pineda said.

Like the other mayors, the youngest Pineda criticized Lapid for throwing his recent film "Boso Militar" and "Tadong Tsuelas" to Pampanga's villagers.

"Instead of throwing no movies, why doesn't he show to his accomplishments?" he said.

Board Member Pineda was introduced during the consultation as "Nanay," in reference to the governor-to-be from the mayors.

In the interview, she called herself a "first-time" candidate but said she was convinced she could give Lapid a good fight.

"I'm not rich in the provincial government nor first years and I can tap kinds of leader-ship which he was a board member (experiencing the league of barangays) and as governor. I tried to conduct and lots of fun," pointed him to work, until her "win-win, my partner for win-win," she said.

Police raid Bulacan house used as lab for shabu

GUIMBAL, BULACAN—POLICE on Friday raided a house believed used as a shabu laboratory in Barangay Cerezan here.

Lawyer Joey Quintores, legal officer of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said the police and PDEA agents, however, failed to arrest any of at least 17 persons they were working in the house the day before the raid.

Recovered from the two-story house were pieces of equipment used to manufacture big batches of shabu, precursors and a can of shabu per pocket-size, police said.

Quintores said the laboratory was one of the biggest shabu production areas raided by the police in the country.

He said the house is located in a compound owned by the family of Bulacan Governor Gloria Trinidad along the Macarthur Highway.

Residents in the area said that for a year staying in the house and has been living in the City of Malolos.

Quintores confronted the value of all equipment and chemicals he recovered in the shabu seizure and in the house at P2 billion.

He said they found at least eight large rotary evaporator machines and at least 100 drums of liquid and powdered chemicals in the house.

Other chemicals were placed in bottles, plastic containers, bottles and sacks. PDEA chemists took samples to determine the chemicals' contents.

Quintores said among the chemicals they identified were benzyl chloride and ephedrine, a major substance in the manufacture of shabu. *Gemmalyn Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

FARM WORK
Woman helps in preparing rice seedling for a third planting cycle while others in all-water for irrigation in Luna, La Union. Weather experts predict an El Niño next year.

Strong waves, winds hamper search for fishermen

NAGUBAN CITY—HUGE WAVES and strong winds in the South China Sea have slowed down the rescue operations for missing fishermen from five coastal towns of Pangasinan and Zambales, according to a task force official overlooking the search.

Army Col. Gregory Cayetano, rescue commander of Task Force Isiknis, said rough seas have significantly increased the rolling time of Navy ships and other vessels involved in the operations, preventing them from covering wider area.

"It's the weather—waves, wind, visibility runs out current," Cayetano said.

As a result, he said, the vessels have been consuming more fuel, slowly exhausting the task force's resources.

He said even the Navy ships were in search in the wrong waves because they had to be pulled out temporarily to Sual, Pangasinan, and Palauig, Zambales, for repairs.

"What complicates the situation is that we now have 4-meter waves," Cayetano said.

He said when the disaster took place on Dec. 11, the wind blew from the north and was all been still floating so that flow to the south and southeast direction.

"But those [boats and fishermen] that took away except by the strong southwester to the south," Cayetano said.

This is the reason, he said, two bodies were found in Sto. Tomas, La Union, and in Urdaneta, Bolinao in Bolinao.

Another body was also found dead to a boat at least 90 nautical miles from Infanta, Pangasinan.

"Right now, we have a search area covering [the South China Sea] from Cayetano [Dora Bora] to Lubing Island (in Bolinao)," Cayetano said.

He said what also made the search and rescue operation difficult was that the fishermen went to a fishing ground 70 to 90 nautical miles from the shore "and even beyond the Philippine territorial limits."

Task force officials had to deploy aircraft to search in possible areas even beyond the 35 nautical mile radius that Navy helicopters can reach.

As of 11 a.m. Saturday, the 29 fishermen found stranded in the Scarborough Shoal, some 130 nautical miles from Infanta, have not been brought home yet.

The number of those missing has increased to 33, after one more fisherman from neighboring Sta. Teresita, was reported missing in the task force.

At least 123 fishermen have been accounted for, according to Cayetano. And the number include those who were rescued and those who came home on their own.

Dan Bo Mangat, barangay captain of Cato in Infanta, the fishing village where most of the fishing fishermen came, said he is still hopeful that his missing constituents would be found alive.

"I still keep on hoping that members they will come home to their families," Mangat said.

Of the 33 fishermen still missing, 24 are from Infanta, four from Agno, 11 from Bolinao, 11 from Dasol, and five from Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

"I hope they were picked up by passing ships and are now somewhere waiting to be returned home," Mayuga said.

Three fishermen from Infanta were earlier rescued by a passing United Hebei Navy ship and another three from Bolinao were were picked up by a commercial vessel en route to China. *Gabriel Gavilan, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

COMING HOME
Passengers walking on go home to the provinces for the holidays in a terrible for tourist buses in a coronation Cubao, Quezon City.

Diwalwal miners reject entry of foreign firms

MANILA CITY—SMALL-SCALE miners on Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley have vowed to oppose a government plan that would allow foreign-mining firms into the area.

The Mineral Resources Development Corp. (MRDC), the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said at least 27 foreign firms were being considered for approval in a bid to develop Mt. Diwalwal's reserves.

The MRDC said at least P144-billion was needed to mine the site but the small-scale miners or the government could not afford it.

The yield of the 600-meter ore was estimated at several billions of dollars.

But Franco Tito, 80, Diwata village chief, said the entry of foreign mining firms would be tantamount to the dislocation, not only of small-scale miners, but of the entire population of the area.

At least 40,000 people live on Mt. Diwata, also known as Diwalwal, which ranked culturally in the 1980s because of killings over gold.

In 2000, the government took control of the site area and established the conduct of mining to prevent hostilities between small-scale miners.

Later, the small-scale miners were allowed to continue their activities but under stricter government supervision. They were also asked to pay taxes.

"The government had to assure that they would not allow foreign investors to operate there in Mt. Diwalwal (Diwata)," Tito, a small-scale miner himself, said.

On Thursday hundreds of miners protested and called on the government to scrap the plan.

"What will you place them if they lose the only means of income they have known for decades here?" Tito asked.

Tito said they could not understand why the government wanted to allow the entry of foreign firms to Diwalwal when small-scale miners have been "entitled in giving a fair share to the government in the form of tax." *Bernie Aca, Inquirer Mindanao*

INQUIRER Mindanao

Bring Home
the True *Spirit*
of Christmas.

"To the season to be jolly -
and what better way to celebrate the Noche Buena
than with family, friends and FRANZIA.
The World's Most Popular Wine.
With its patented Smart Tap packaging.
FRANZIA is sure to make any Christmas feast more special.
Merry Christmas!

Your Battery Centers are conveniently located at the following prestigious stores:

toysrus
makro

LUMAD folk rest from their caroling in front of the Davao City Hall. RICO OCAMPO

'Lumad' carolers take to the streets

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

FROM HER FOREHEAD, beads of sweat flowed down her cheek, reaching the pale chin of 8-month-old Rosabel, whose face was pressed hard on her breasts.

Sitting on dry earth, her two other children, trained on a pink of pawit (noodles), look lukewarmed, that they had played the food literally on the ground.

Their mother, 30-year-old Rosabel Libasan, was astonished at the unnamed mother pack she bought from her last P100. Now with less than P100 in his pocket, the appears void of any worries despite not being home, away from his husband and four other children in their village in Davao City's Pangibian District.

Libasan is one of the more than 20,000 Lumad (indigenous peoples), mostly children, who have descended upon the city since early this month to raise for the Christmas season.

On her second day of stay in the area, Libasan would roam around the city, her children in tow, knock on the door of every house, especially the lavishly decorated, to beg for gifts — money, clothing, foodstuff, toys and anything considered almost of new and disposable.

"We arrived yesterday and so far haven't got anything today. I will start roaming around tomorrow ... perhaps I will also get some clothing and some of the stuff they (they) got," said Libasan shyly in Cebuano.

Libasan is one of the more than 20,000 Lumad (indigenous peoples), mostly children, who have descended upon the city since early this month to raise for the Christmas season.

On her second day of stay in the area, Libasan would roam around the city, her children in tow, knock on the door of every house, especially the lavishly decorated, to beg for gifts — money, clothing, foodstuff, toys and anything considered almost of new and disposable.

"We arrived yesterday and so far haven't got anything today. I will start roaming around tomorrow ... perhaps I will also get some clothing and some of the stuff they (they) got," said Libasan shyly in Cebuano.

Packed gymnasium

Her last stop where the Libasans are is the SR Marino gymnasium, a spacious facility that has lost its grandness and now appears like a huge tin can packed with 3,000 people who have evacuated since Dec. 1.

At just 11 a.m., they agreed and his wife, Lenggot Jaywel said they had not yet eaten breakfast. They were waiting for food relief from the city government.

Once they get hold of their food packs, the couple, exhaustedly dressed in their native garb, will try to entertain city folks by showing their traditional dances for a few centavos.

"If they are compassionate enough, perhaps they will give us more than a few centavos. Perhaps they will give us food, clothing or medicines which we don't have. That's all we need. If they don't give us anything, it's OK. If they will give us some, we will be very happy ... it's Christmas anyway," Jaywel said in Cebuano.

"If we don't do this, how will we be able to buy salt?" she added.

Leading exactly the accumulation center from afar and counting just the one, the generators table of differentiating and lawful stories about the people who temporarily seek shelter in it — the same people who, according to some critics, have lost their sense of self and culture to something alien, not part of Lumad culture, like Christmas.

Albert Barry surveyed by sources, the Barangay Call and Communities and Affairs Division (BCCAD) of the office of Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has been providing them food, including a kilo of rice, four packs of noodles and a few cans of sardines.

They also go around the city for their "pangayo" (caroling).

In Bangkerohan, the gymnasium is also congested with around 1,200 tribal families. Five women have already given birth there, according to barangay chair Felipa Empera. A mother from Agusan, however, lost her baby to a vehicular accident somewhere in Buhangin, reports said.

Roy Rigor, coordinator of BCCAD, said other housing areas for the Lumad were congested, too. The city government has also designated temporary shelters in the villages of Buhangin, Tibungco, Colosas and Bolt.

Some of the tarbuls are from as far as Talaingod in Davao del Norte, the Agusan provinces, and Surigao, while others belong to cultural communities within the Davao territories.

Doubled

This year, Rigor said, the number of families nearly doubled compared to last year. In 2005, he said, the figure only reached 1,000, while latest city records showed at least 1,500.

"We decided to stop the fasting and the distribution of the tickets. For the food tickets, we are still distributing food but not the tickets. And some of the Lumad have become so shrewd that we have difficulty identifying them," he said.

Last week, Rigor said, at least 200 families left Bankerohan. "We thought they have left for home only to learn later that they just transferred to Buhangin."

Health officials reported several cases of diseases in the centers. For The 9th Medical group alone, at least 20 people, mostly children, had sore eyes, diarrhea, skin rashes, colds, coughs and fevers.

Diseases

"We can no longer prevent these diseases from occurring because of the situation. It's congested here and sanitation is really unbelievable. Children are most of the time vulnerable to these diseases," Dr. Joy Gerasmo said.

According to a critic, the managers has been engaged in moral screening and in fact, has destroyed the culture and dignity of the Lumad.

"We don't celebrate Christmas as much as we don't observe days and months," said Jose Anduan, an officer of the consultative body of the National Commission for the Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and para-professional of the Ata Tribal Association of Davao Inc. (ATAD).

"What the Lumad were are doing is really demeaning to the culture and to themselves as persons," he said. They are not doing the panggoys but begging, he said.

"Everything about us is supposed to be sacred — our dances, clothes, the food we eat we are, and we just don't perform dances because we want to beg for a few centavos," he said.

Anduan has been urging other tribal leaders to discourage their people from going to the city streets every Christmas season.

"We have to preserve the culture which is so rich and so beautiful. We have to protect it because it is our identity. I have been telling them to fill their heads and be contented with what they have instead of going to the city and beg," he said.

Bayan Muna says 15 of its members are dead men walking

LUCBAN CITY—AT LEAST 15 leftist activists from Zamboanga province are marked for assassination by a military-backed death squad, the leftist group Bayan Muna said.

Robert De Castro, Bayan Muna national deputy secretary general, said the group got the information from "sympathetic allies within the AFP."

He said the 15 would be killed in retaliation for the assassination by communist rebels of Capt. Jerrold Nuesca, an intelligence officer of the Philippine Army's 102nd Infantry Brigade.

Nuesca was shot dead in Ipil town last Nov. 27.

Nuesca, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was on a "counter-insurgency" mission in the rural villages when the rebels shot him at close range.

De Castro said the military seized to avenge the death of Nuesca.

"But it is the legal and unarmed activists who always bear the brunt of the violence of state forces. Up to forty every time we lose a life like one of ours," De Castro said.

On Friday, Francisco Baroog, chair of Bayan Muna-Sorsogon, was shot dead by three armed men in Barangay Bancalan in Bacacay, Sorsogon.

Baroog was the third militant leader killed in the province by unidentified gunmen in just two weeks.

Activist Gin Peñalde and human rights lawyer Tjil Cupil were earlier gunned down separately in Irosin and Lubao towns.

"They already killed three of us in Sorsogon, the cold-blooded bastards will try to kill 12 more from among the activists in the province," said De Castro.

Stating was the 120th Bayan Muna member and the 70th leftist activist killed under the Arroyo administration, according to De Castro.

De Castro said Bayan Muna was now taking extra caution and implementing security measures to protect its members. He did not elaborate.

"For every fallen martyr, hundreds of others will stand to take his place...," De Castro said.

De Castro identified the government security forces, rebels and "persons on the target arena of operation by military-backed death squads.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered police to stop the killings, but the murders continued.

The top official of the national police command-Chief Director of police would be relieved if they failed to prevent the murder of leftist activists.

The military has some under fire for the string of assassinations and abductions of journalists and leftist activists, mostly in the provinces.

Military authorities, however, denied they were behind the killings. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

ILAGAN SHOP

Bicolano families, who are short of cash, have proceeded to the city's largest houses (regency shops) for gifts. These young girls enjoyed the trip, because most of the shops have a rich source of merchandised toys imported from Asian countries.

2,000 Army men register as voters in Cebu

By Jolene R. Bukanhot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AT LEAST 2,000 SOLDIERS from the Central Command, Naval Forces Central and the Philippine Air Force have registered at the Commission on Elections (Comelec) as voters in Cebu.

Clad in their uniforms, the soldiers were brought to the Comelec offices in the cities of Cebu and Lapu-lapu by military trucks in batches.

Col. Arthur Tabaondato, Centcom spokesperson, said all soldiers assigned in Central Command and other units based in Cebu were directed to register as they could vote in the 2007 elections.

Tabaondato said a survey conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines showed that very few soldiers exercise their right to vote citing failure to register as the main reason.

Only 38 percent of the more than 1,000 organic members of Centcom were able to vote in the 2004 elections, he added.

"The statistics we are referring to is about the random survey that we conducted with a milestone that the survey very low, so since this is being mandated by the Constitution, all of us must carry out this task and responsibility with gusto," Tabaondato said.

The mass registration became necessary after Centcom received the results of the random survey they conducted several months ago, he added.

This is also the first time that soldiers have been encouraged by Centcom to register and vote in the elections, Tabaondato further said.

"We are trying to hit 100 percent target. It is our duty as citizen of this country to participate in the elections by casting our votes. So Central Command, we already gave the go-signal," he said.

Capt. Ferdinand Urrutia, of the 2nd Tactical Operations Wing of the Philippine Air Force based in Mactan Island, denied that the mass registration of soldiers was ordered by Malacañang.

Urrutia said the AFP is an independent and an apolitical institution and has been urging soldiers to act as models by exercising their right to vote.

Urrutia said the PAF in Mactan had been closely coordinating with the Lapu-lapu City Comelec since November.

So far, more than 1,000 PAF personnel had registered already, he said.

Lt. Jr. Grade Alex Cantos, meanwhile, told the Inquirer that Navforces had been given the guidance to direct its personnel to register.

At least 99 Navy men had already registered.

"It's not really a Malacañang-backed order. There is no truth to that. We are here to exercise our rights. It is our duty to vote. Although this is the first time that there is mass registration but there is nothing new to this because soldiers have been voting in the past elections," he said. Comelec regional director Manuel Arbiñada said there are more than 2 million registered voters in Cebu in the 2007 elections.

Arbiñada said the Comelec expects an increase of 10 percent in the number of voters.

33 Samar guerrillas surrender

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—AT LEAST 33 members of the New People's Army based in a forest town surrendered this week to the military.

The rebel returnees told the military they decided to surrender due to the hardship they experienced in the mountains.

According to them, they were already tired of their life in the mountains. They want to have a normal life and return to the mainstream society," Lt. Col. Jonathan Potot, 62nd Infantry Battalion commanding officer, said.

Potot said that the rebel returnees also turned over 16 rifles, three anti-tank launcher when they surrendered on Dec. 17 at the Army headquarters in Gallega town, 61 km from here.

Potot also cited their surrender as a significant step against members of the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, as the other returnee the rebels decided to surrender, he said.

He said that the 33 NPA members surrendered en masse.

"But there were negotiations between us before we considered their decision to surrender," Potot said.

The former rebels were operating in the mountains of Villareal, considered by the military as one of the towns in Samar where communist guerrillas operate heavily.

"We consider their surrender as a victory as we continue in our relentless campaign to end the insurgency problem in the entire Eastern Visayas region," Potot said.

The former NPA members, after undergoing debriefing, were included as members of the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO), a group organized by the military during the time of communist Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, former commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division.

The current commanding general of the division is Maj. Gen. Rodrigo Maclang.

The CVO was created by the military in the barangay level as a force in counter - insurgency rebels.

The 33 former NPA members were said to be residents of Barangays Inonhan and Sto. Rosa, both in Villareal town.

THE MILITARY campaign against communist rebels in mineralized has taken various forms, like gathering people like these villagers in Quezon province in an anti-communist rally in Catanauan, Quezon.

Key bridge in Sorsogon in danger of collapsing

SORSOGON CITY—AT LEAST 11 towns and the city of Sorsogon might be isolated from Luzon as the only concrete bridge in the eastern part of the country is seen in danger of collapse as a result of the monsoon typhoon that hit the province, an official of the Department of Public Works and Highways here said.

The Casiguran Bridge in Barangay Bated here, which lies along the national highway also serves the Luzon-Visayas-Mindanao route.

Ramon Dolorico, acting district engineer, said the flash floods spawned by Supertyphoon "Milenyo" and "Reming" had destroyed the roundabout on the bridge protected the bridge's footings.

As a result, the bridge's footings and foundation were loosened, and are now exposed, he explained.

The DPWH had limited to load capacity from 15 tons down to 5 tons to prevent its collapse, Dolorico said.

Built in 1978, the Casiguran Bridge spans 150 meters and lies along the Maharlika Highway, which is the province's only access to mainland Luzon.

It's also the only access of vehicles from the Visayas and Mindanao via land transportation and vice versa.

Dolorico said the DPWH already submitted a report to the Department of Public Works and Highways and requested P1.8 million for the bridge's immediate repair.

The DPWH official estimated that the government would need at least P90 million for the construction of a new bridge, should the existing one collapse, cost to isolate the economic zones and investment it would cause to the public.

Meanwhile, residents of Barangay Bated attributed the bridge's dangerous situation to the unabated quarrying within the one-kilometer prohibited area upstream and downstream.

Some residents of the village have already filed a complaint at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan against those involved in the quarrying.

The provincial board has already conducted a committee hearing but it has yet to resolve its findings, although some sources said some local businessmen were among those identified as involved in the illegal extraction of quarry materials at the Gimayan River.

The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer of the local government unit has been helpless in stopping the illegal quarrying operations. Bobby Q. Labañan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Subic resort owners want fish cages in Zambales removed quickly

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE SUBIC Bay Resorts Association (Subra) opposed the appeal of the Subic Fish Cages Operators Association (Subicfca) to the Department of Environment Secretary to order the agency's cease-and-desist order on fish cages until February 2007.

The lawyer of Subra, Agustin Chan, registered the opposition in a hearing held at the DAR Central Luzon office here.

Subicfca had requested the temporary restraining order to maintain the reservation of the order dated Aug. 29.

Subicfca president Emilio Ardiente sought the extension in a Sept. 11 letter to DAR Regional Director Lourdes Lantin.

Subra cited the record of members for "simple time to harvest our fish" in cages in 22 hectares of the municipal waters of Subic, Zambales.

It was on Lantin-II Claudio approved or turned down the request. She was out of her office on Wednesday, attending a meeting of DAR regional directors in Quezon City, a member of her staff said.

Claudio-Ed are reply to keynote cultural tol. campaign. The hearing officer declined to give an official statement on the action taken by Claudio pending the latter's decision.

Subra's motion filed on May 23 indicated that the DAR's then had failed to fully enforce its area order. According to the group, some companies "continued to operate and even built new fish cages despite its pendency of the said Order to the damage and prejudice of the complainants."

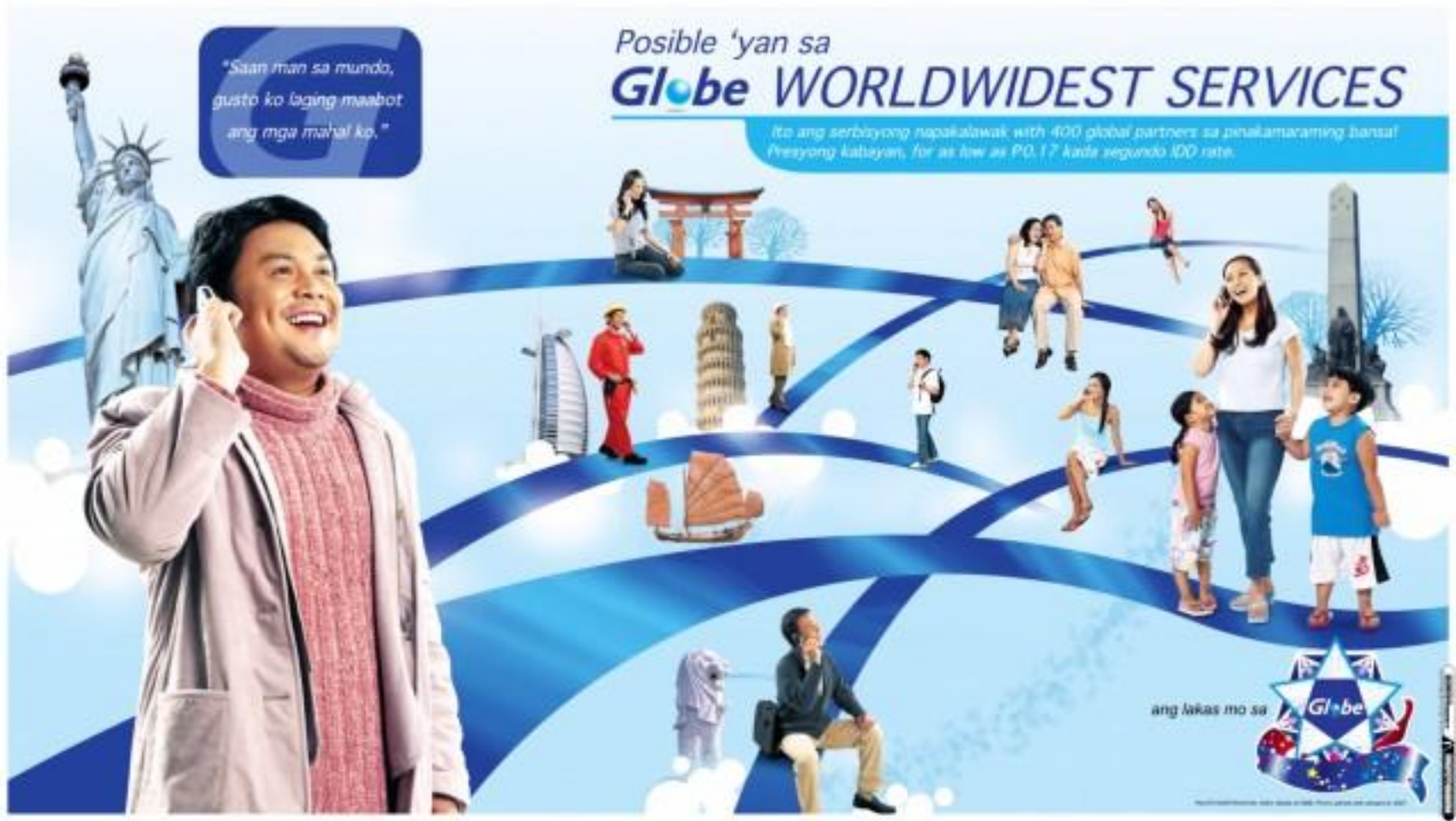
The complainants include Zambales Vice Gov. Ramon Lacbain II, Mark Figueroa of the Sanduang Pinagkaisa sa Bagsakan ng Dilanggas, Subic at San Antonio (Sapa-Sug), members de la Llana of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority's geology department and Senior Supt. Adriano Silvestre of the maritime police.

Chan said the DAR has no basis to give the cease order to the appeal of fish operators the order was in full final and necessary.

The order gave the operators seven days to dismantle the cages and to remove only when they have secured environmental clearance certificates (ECCs) from the DAB. The order also warned of legal actions for non-compliance.

Subicfca reported that as of Dec. 16, there were 1,000 fish cages in the Subic cages from 30 to 40; Subara from 40 to 50; 20 to one hectare, and links from 120 to 14. Golden Apex Farmers and Shrimp reported "no operation."

The hearing officer said these pieces of information, including inquiries on the continuing aquaculture activities, have to be verified by actual visits to the sites. Rosario Ong-Jaquilet, Inquirer Central Luzon


"Saan man sa mundo, gusto ko laging maabot ang mga mahal ko."
Posible 'yan sa
Globe WORLDWIDEST SERVICES
Ito ang serbisyong napakalawak with 400 global partners sa pinakamaraming bansa! Presyong kabayan, for as low as P0.17 kada segundo IDD rate.
ang lakas mo sa Globe

Aplus METRO
Editor Bror G. Dipasupil
Tell us your feedback: inquirer.metromanila@gmail.com Editor's Desk (02) 896-6000 local 3200 E-mail: jo_mendiola@inquirer.com.ph

Marikina's many versions of the Nativity

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WITH MORE THAN 500 depictions of the Nativity scene, the Belen Museum in Marikina City does not need any additional holiday trimmings.

In fact, every day feels like Christmas in this place.

"We want our people to feel the spirit of Christmas not only in December but every day of the year, especially when they enter the museum," Marikina City cultural officer Rhea Antonio told the Inquirer.

The museum inside the Department of Education building in Marikina City is a testament to one woman's devotion to the joy of Christmas.

Different colors and sizes

Owned by Carmen Carlos, an aunt of Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando, the Belen room in different colors and sizes—ranging from a life-size version down to pupper-maker in size that is so small it can fit inside a jewelry box complete the super-cute scene.

There are paintings and dioramas as well as miniature universes inside wooden boxes. The pieces hang on the museum's pink solid and soft cut it three-level display rack in the small air-conditioned room. Some are arranged in small triangular wooden frames set up on reversible a Christmas tree or—in the case of especially delicate ones made of crystal, silver or glass—placed inside three glass cabinets.

The traditional Belen, a popular Christmas decor, depicts the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger, surrounded by his parents Mary and Joseph and the three Wise Men.

Most of the pieces were given to Carmen by friends, Antonio said.

International flavor

They come from various parts of the world. There is one set that shows a Filipino Nativity scene, the carved wooden figures wearing a G-string, thereby Filipino and have Caps, and there are also one set with Chinese-like figures.

THE BELEN Museum in Marikina City is home to 751 depictions of the Nativity scene. PHOTOS BY ARY LUNA

AMAZE the museum is in Christmas all year long, says Marikina City cultural officer Rhea Antonio.

Antonio said her favorite was the one Carlos bought in Africa. The skin-colored figures are made of wood.

Through the Belen are made of different materials, they share one message: The coming of the Lord.

On the wall are paintings on canvases or ceramic plates. There are also framed cross-stitch and cushioned items.

Some pieces are carved out of whole blocks of wood and stone. The exhibition consist of three or more pieces made of every conceivable material—clay, glass, ceramic, wood, fiber glass, plastic, resin, cloth, wood sticks, even copper wire and candles.

There is also a set of candle holders, each painted to look like a character in the Belen. There is a diorama of pipe organs lit by small electric bulbs.

And there's even a Belen made of keys. Carlos said it was a gift from artist Wenceslao Cinco. The keys were arranged on reversible Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the Magi. We the clergy, the keys were adorned with yellow paper clips.

One Belen is made of small figures cut from ice sheets then painted.

The star Carlos got from Zambales, Antonio said, was made of ink fish which came from Mount Pinatubo.

But perhaps one of the most remarkable in the collection is a diorama of at least 14 figures made of plastic arranged inside a miniature wooden hut. That was the first of Carlos' growing collection which already numbers over 500, Antonio said.

Carlos bought her first Belen in a religious shop when she was just a high school freshman in 1955. The Belen con

MARIKINA | A 18

Animal lover has furry Merry Christmas

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A FEW WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS, animal lovers put an urgent e-mail about a dwindling rescuer of abandoned cats who needed help in bringing her beloved pets in his new home in another part of the country.

Melinda Delfin, a 61-year-old single mother, had decided to leave her Laguna home and move to Cebu City where she had been given an opportunity to retire her teaching career.

Taking her time, grown-up children was not a problem, but Delfin needed a staggering amount to transport her 40 cats and three dogs to Cebu.

"Leaving them was not an option," Delfin told the business executives at the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) rehabilitation center in Quezon City.

She could not imagine abandoning the cats or leaving them adopted on the block and colleagues had suggested.

"These animals have become part of my family. Why adopt them in the first place, only to leave them to die in the end?" Delfin said.

The modest, calm woman had two family members in Laguna from Cebu 27 years ago, began rescuing stray cats in town. They received their first cat house.

"The subdivision was new, so there were a lot of unused lots where cats roamed," Delfin recalled. She said her children were also active in the rescue operations.

Over the years, the Delfins saved at least 200 cats and a number of dogs.

"There were times when the cats just left us," she said. The furry members of the Delfin family who passed on were buried in the flower garden and remembered with "Requiem" and hymns.

Delfin recalled how she tried when one of the family's beloved canines, Princess Doggie, died of old age earlier this year.

Five years ago, she found the dog bathing from a cutaway a couple of blocks away from their house. "I did not see what it was, I could only hear barks," Delfin said. Eight days later, she found the dog lying in front of their home.

"We found out through our veterinarian that Princess Doggie was blind and deaf," she said. "How she managed to follow our home scent is a mystery."

Delfin said that even though their dogs—Isabo, a Labrador retriever mix, a golden cob lover, and Bud, a cattle dog adopted from Edsa—hold special places in their hearts because of their unconditional love and loyalty, they also devastated their cats with the same amount of love.

"Most people do not think much of these cats, treating them like worthless garbage," she said sadly.

Delfin, who inherited her affection for cats from her grandmother and mother, stressed that animals should be loved and cared for.

"I get really sad when they look at me with their big eyes and I see how helpless they are," she said.

Delfin said all the family can have these cats special areas in the house. They can vacuum regularly and given adequate water and food.

The cats could even use her toys in their own simple ways. A pair of contraceptives or an effectiveness brush against her legs are enough to make her day, Delfin said with a smile.

An amazing story involving one of her cats reminded Delfin how important—and rewarding—her mission was.

Take came to the Delfin family when his original owner, a Puerto Rican diplomat, left the country years ago.

"He was a very antisocial cat, preferring to stay all day under the bed," Delfin said, smiling fondly.

Take was later given to her daughter Lori Beatrice, who lived in an apartment with her husband and 3-year-old son Andrew.

Delfin recalled how one day, Toby make Lori up at 5 a.m., determinedly crouching for until her leg bled.

Wondering what the cat was up to, Lori followed an agitated Toby to her son's room.

When she opened the door, she was shocked to see that it was crawled by an overheated industrial fan had spread to her son's edible mat and had almost reached a sleeping baby.

"If not for Toby, Andre would have perished in that fire," Delfin told with a shudder. Andre is now 7 years old.

The incident, plus a thousand and memories of her pets, led Delfin to seek help from various people and organizations in the world that take the animals with her to Cebu.

"We were losing hope because Christmas Day was fast approaching and nobody seemed to be interested in helping us," Delfin said. Most people she had approached did not care for cats.

"All I wanted was for us to spend Christmas together as a big family, this our always have," she added.

But a week before Christmas, Delfin got her wish. Officials of the animal welfare group Compassion and Responsibility to Its Animals (Cara) pledged to take care of the cats' vaccination expenses and provided the cages for their home trip.

Many animal lovers, who responded to their e-mail telling Delfin's story, gave at least P10,000 for the transportation expenses, enough to bring all the cats to Cebu.

"The kindhearted donors told me they would not want us to be separated like Claymores," Delfin said, tears eyed.

She stressed that her animal rescue activities would continue in Cebu.

"I am planning to put up a facility soon so no more homes whose abandoned cats could take refuge," Delfin said, adding that she would also encourage her neighbors to volunteer for the special mission.

She said she would also spearhead a campaign to help regulate the number of pets in the area.

"Hopefully, the idea would spread to neighboring areas and, eventually, the rest of the country," Delfin said.

But, at the moment, she said she was simply happy to get her Christmas wish. To spend a warm, furry Christmas with her children—humans and nonhumans.

HELPER Delfin, an animal lover, bonds with her cats, cared by stray which she took in.

THE DELFINS have 40 cats and three dogs.

NBI starts investigating killing of ex-policeman

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) has begun probing the case of a former Manila policeman who was shot to death in the parking lot of a mall in Intramuros, Manila last Friday afternoon.

NBI Deputy Director for Regional Operations Services (ROS) Reynaldo Esmeralda said he has assigned the case to the bureau's National Capital Region (NCR) Office for further investigation.

Esmeralda said victim Rolando Cortez, 59, of RP Sensors Village, Las Piñas City, had been connected with the controversial Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force headed by former Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Director Reynaldo Aujo.

Cortez was also detailed as a special investigator at the NBI when it was still headed by Alfredo Lim who is now a mayoral frontrunner, Esmeralda said.

Cortez alleged companion, Armando Lardizabal, 48, of Sta. Ana, Manila, was also killed in the same incident. He was declared dead on arrival at the Gopalal ng Maynilad to a gunshot wound in the head.

Initial investigation conducted by the Manila Police District (MPD) showed that Cortez and Lardizabal just alighted from separate vehicles in the Harrison Plaza parking lot at around 5:40 p.m. when an unidentified man approached them.

The man said to have tried to help when the suspect and Cortez grappled with each other. However, a second suspect appeared out of nowhere and shot the victim in the head.

Esmeralda said he may have seen the gunman before the incident while he was having lunch at the coffee shop of the nearby Century Park Hotel.

"I saw a suspicious individual wearing an orange football cap who seemed to be looking for someone at the vending area," Esmeralda added.

The NBI official added that Cortez usually ate at the vending area whenever he met with colleagues.

Esmeralda said he would ask the hotel for copies of footages taken by its close-circuit television that could lead to the identification of the suspect.

"We would then ask the witnesses, one of whom was a parking boy who asked for a Christmas tip from the gunman, to identify the individual in the video," he added.

CARVING Carlos, the owner of the pieces inside the museum, says she started her collection because she likes Christmas. Some of her Belen are big (below) while some can fit in the palm of one's hand.

Marikina's many versions . . .

Front page A1

her less than P100, but it started a passion she would pursue for the next half a quarter century.

When the Belenan first featured the collection in 1997, Carlos already had about 50 Belen.

That year, thanks to the help of a friend—the late Adoh Magsalin (whom she met in a seminar on Belen making), the room in front of the Belen Museum—Carlos wanted an annual "open house" to show her "treasures" to friends.

Gifts from friends

Friends who hear/see/about her passion got in her room Belen and her collection grew.

"I like the Belen because I like Christmas," Carlos, now over 70, told an arts management student in an interview earlier this year.

Fascinated with the collection, Jayana Emerald Zafra, who graduated from the University of the Philippines-Manila in October, did a thesis on the museum.

Zafra, who trained at the museum, owns to her thesis that Carlos found a home for her collection after a casual talk with her niece, the interns. They wanted more people to enjoy the collection.

The museum formally opened two days before Christmas last year, according to Zafra, who visited the museum every now and then to bring new pieces.

Interns said Carlos hopes to bring her collection to the museum eventually. But the museum would need a bigger space for that on the upper floor of the building.

Still, in its current home, the sight of so many Belen is never than enough to remind people that Christmas is not just about presents and gifts but that it's about a child who would forever change the world.

Man holds boy hostage in church

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A STROLL IN FRONT OF A CHURCH IN Las Piñas City became a nightmare for a 4-year-old boy and his aunt when a man, believed to be under the influence of drugs, held the youngster hostage inside the church yesterday.

The boy, who suffered a cut in the shoulder, was rushed to the Las Piñas District Hospital. Seven hours after the incident, Rodel Bernez, was detained by a policeman who pretended to be a priest, said Insp. Shelia Tuvera, chief of the criminal investigation division.

The victim and his 22-year-old aunt, Bernie Libris, were strolling on a bench on the church grounds at the Immaculate Conception Parish, home of the world-famous Bamboo Organ, at around 9:30 a.m. when the suspect grabbed the boy and dragged him inside the church.

The aunt and nephew had dropped by the church to check out the Christmas lights on display in the compound, Tuvera said the hostage.

Wielding a nine-inch kitchen knife, Bernez brought the child to the altar, pointing christ figure praying the victim was crying toward the exit.

The Special Weapons and Tactics team and policemen from the Police Community Precinct-1 rushed to the scene after Libris called for help.

"I tried to pacify him by talking to him as I assured him we feel that I was a friend," said Tuvera, who led the negotiation with the help of a priest, Rev. Greg Gacusan.

Tuvera said the suspect appeared to be under the influence of drugs. She said there was someone who wanted to kill him, the said, he was saying that he has personal problems," Tuvera said the hostage.

The boy was rescued after PO3 Joel Cuesta, disguised as a priest, entered the church and swiftly disarmed the suspect.

Bernez will face charges of attempted homicide at the city prosecutor's office.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

GLOBAL Pinoy

Edited by Sherry Ann Q. Jimenez

A 19

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and whenever work permits motivated to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

FROM LAGUNA WITH LOVE

What their kids do when they party

By Estrella Dizon-Kintanar
Contributor

WHEN I WAS WORKING in Germany, one of my loneliest moments was during Christmastime. I missed the *parol* and Christmas lights on the windows of houses. I missed the nightly caroling of children and Christmas carols being sung on the radios and department stores.

I missed the custom, homemade chocolate from peanuts and cacao, kalamay, suman and other kinds of old Christmas delicacies and the company of children, relatives and friends going from one house to another and receiving gifts from money and misery. I was experiencing this homesickness and loneliness despite the fact that I was with my husband and child. I was just imagine how great the handiness of the mothers and fathers working abroad and their children and loved ones who have to spend their Christmas away from each other.

Which is why SIKAP-BAKLAS, a non-government organization providing economic and social services to OFWs and their families in Laguna and Batangas, we always have a Christmas affair with the families of OFWs, especially the children left behind. This year, the Pamaskong Handog ng OFW at Pamilya was celebrated on Dec. 17 at the Women and OFW Center in San Pablo City, Laguna.

Savers Club

One of the highlights of the event was the Batang Ahlihi Savers Club (BASC) Congress with the theme, "Children's Response to the Challenge of Migration." It was attended by about 200 children from barangays and Laguna. It was inspiring to see a lot of children actively very early. There who came from Mabini Batangas have our even eaten breakfast to make sure they did not arrive late to the Congress.

The opening ceremony was impressive. The Children's group of dance presentation entitled "Bawal na Dayuhan" by Batang Ahlihi San Diego Laguna chapter. It was followed by a mother-daughter interpretative dance number on Filipino virtues and tradition of BASC members, together with their mothers in matching costumes. The presentation reflect the value of respect for elders and piecing and loving together.

I was seeing these children of BASC grow before my eyes. I was surprised to see that the sweet, Gloc Ursabian, 11, living in Bitin junior manager of San Pablo had grown to big that he is now 5'5". There is no anyone whose starts, as, OFW working in Canada is supporting him. He has always been one of our watch leaders since he started with the BASC.

Value parents' sacrifice

The guest speaker of the congress was Rachel Anato, whose mother is a domestic helper working in Saudi Arabia.

Rachel, a BASC member, graduated valedictorian last year. She is now 18 year college studying Chemical Engineering at the UP Diliman. Rachel dropped by our office four days ago bringing a thank you letter to Branch of Bitin who had provided financial assistance to augment the funds needed for her registration fee. I was to seen when I saw her grades. They were all 1's and she managed to be a university scholar in her the semesters. And I think all our OFW friends abroad who are supporting their children in the Philippines.

Rachel's talk centered on valuing the sacrifices of their parents while working abroad. "We have to be good children and the best that we can to our parents growing up, without our parents should not be an obstacle to our success in life," she said.

"Ang mahirap na bagay ay dito di nakakapiling ang mga magulang namin ang ating mga magulang kaya dapat pagbutihin natin para sa kinabukasan natin ang mga magulang namin na nasa ibang bansa," Rachel enlisted.

"During Christmas, when my mother was still in the Philippines, Santa whom I secretly knew was my mother always gave me candies during Christmas time. I rewarded the gift because I thought I deserved more than just candies. Then, she went abroad and for three Christmases I am not able to see her. I missed her so much and I realized that I should have valued my mother more when she was with us. So, sooner how cheap her gifts were, I should have valued them and valued her efforts in providing something for us. Material things are not important compared to being together with our parents so we have to study hard so that we can be with them the soonest possible time."

Unforgettable story

Asked what affected her most about Rachel's message, Jane Alvarez, 14 years old from Batangas whose father is working in a hotel in Qatar said, "I am affected by her story and I felt the grave sacrifice of our parents which we should repay by being good and studying hard. I will never forget her story about Santa."

Oftentimes, the children of OFWs feel depressed and depleted because their family is never complete. There lead to resentment toward their parents. But Rachel's story gave them another perspective.

"I realized that we are very fortunate for having parents who sacrifice so much so that we will have a better future," said Nora Mateo, a daughter of a migrant who returned from Italy and who gave up with her mama for 6 years.

After the talk of Rachel, the children were divided into seven membership groups and were assigned to draw their wish for their parents who are working abroad this Christmas. Most of their artwork manifested being together as a family, including how they tearfully miss their parent.

At the end of the congress, 20 children were given awards for being Modelong Batang Ahlihi. These are the children who are consistently saving their money weekly. Mother Cabaes is the Batang Ahlihi Savers of the Year. Laguna. She is a seamstress saver, youth leader and active in interactions and value formation activities. She is 12 years old. Graduating from San Diego Elementary School where father was been working for 11 years as an electrician in Saudi Arabia.

Lady Jaelle Magsalayan, 12 years old from Pedro, Wawpaw Bitin Batangas is the Batang Ahlihi Saver of the Year for Batangas. Jaelle is the junior manager of Ahlihi Batangas. Aside from saving weekly, she has attended all the training conducted by the BASC. She collects the savings of their chapter and it also a member of other children. She has the highest savings from the production of accessories, bracelet and flip-flops to their young entrepreneurs program. Her father has just returned from Taiwan and her mother is leaving for Italy.

Batang Ahlihi Savers Club is an organization of about 1,000 children of OFWs and other children in the community who are aware of the need to save their hard-earned money of their parents. They are involved in activities that support other less fortunate children.

CHILDREN of overseas Filipino workers show certificates of membership in Batang Ahlihi Savers Club, a program encouraging them to make the most out of the money sent by their parents, during a program in San Pablo City, Laguna.

> I am seeing these children grow before my eyes. Living without one or both of their parents, they oftentimes feel depressed and deprived, but these kids are too precious to be left alone

Home at last for Christmas!

By Joric G. Contreras
Contributor

THE Inquirer INTERVIEWS some OFWs who decided to spend their Christmas vacation here. Here's what we found out:

Arbey Tolin, 27, laundry attendant on the M/V Golden Princess, returned home in November to be with his family in Buena Vista for the Holiday season. He missed last year when he celebrated his first Christmas away from his family and country.

"I wished for almost a year but [myself] just to see my family and friends again. What happened was a blessing in disguise, my contract was supposed to expire later this month. But it was hastened. I would love your home after Christmas. It would be better," he told the Inquirer.

According to Arbey, aside from his prime reason of being with his family, he is also excited to meet again with his newly promise of completing and attending the Misa de Gallo (Simbang Gabi)—a nine-day predawn novena before Christmas Day.

"Every year, and it started when I was still a kid, it has become my personal devotion to attend Simbang Gabi. It gives me a different feeling and fulfillment whenever I complete the predawn masses. It's also my way of thanking and honoring God for the blessings He has given [to] me," he explained.

TALISMAN in Greece: I take something else Misa de Gallo.

Manolito Vitas, 44, a factor worker in Lyon, a French cruise ship, took a break from work abroad just to celebrate Christmas with his family and friends in Bulacan.

"It's a different feeling when you're celebrating Christmas at home. It makes me fulfilled and satisfied. Seeing all my [nieces] [godchildren] brings me happiness and joy," he said.

For Manolito, "Christmas celebration has never been better in the Philippines." According to him, Filipinos have the longest and sweetest Christmas celebration.

"I have been to Europe and America, and other parts of the world. I have experienced Christmas celebrations abroad, but I could proudly say that Christmas in the Philippines is unmatchable. We celebrate it for such a long period of time, up until January's Feast walang pero ang mga kababayan, saka ang Barkot," he exclaimed.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

From Akihito, an antiwar message on 73rd birthday

TOKYO—THE MAKER OF World War II must be taught to future generations so the past is never repeated, Japanese Emperor Akihito said in comments marking his 73rd birthday Saturday.

The emperor told a press conference for local media Thursday it was also important to honor those who died in the war, according to a transcript released Sunday by the Imperial Household Agency.

Akihito said modern-day Japan was built on the sacrifices of the Japanese people during WWII, saying the hundreds of thousands who died in the military and Nagasaki following the U.S. atomic bombings, that ended the war in 1945.

"I sincerely hope that the facts about the war and the use of force will continue to be correctly conveyed to those of the generations that do not have direct knowledge of the war, so that the kind of tragedy of war that we experienced in the past will never be repeated," Akihito said.

However, the emperor did not specifically mention the Pearl Harbor attack, which formed Japan's 2.5 million men dead, including executed war criminals. Critics say the divine pacifism Japan's militaristic past, in which it conquered and colonized much of Asia during the first half of the 20th century.

Repeated trips by former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine

EMPEROR AKIHITO

seventh detained relatives with Chinese and South Koreans among them.

Debates on Beijing's tactic subsided this summer following media reports that former Emperor Hirohito, Akihito's father, stopped visiting the Shinto shrine after its dead were in 1978 to begin honoring several war criminals.

Akihito was asked at the press conference how his father felt about honoring the war dead. "I had never heard from the emperor regarding the honoring of the war dead," he replied.

Foreign media news was invited to Thursday's press conference, and the transcript was held for release until his birthday.

About 10,500 well-wishers visited the Imperial Palace on Saturday to celebrate Akihito's birthday, according to the agency. AP

Forklift driver charged in UK prostitute murders

IPSWICH, ENGLAND—A MAN APPEARED IN court on Friday accused of murdering five prostitutes during an unprecedented serial killing spree in eastern England which terrified locals and gripped Britain.

Steven Wright is accused of killing Gemma Adams, Tania Nicol, Anneli Alderton, Paula Clennell and Annette Nicholls, whose naked bodies were found dumped or used locations around the town of Ipswich in the county of Suffolk.

The bodies were discovered in the space of 11 days and the speed of the murders was said by the local police chief to be unrivalled in British criminal history.

The 46-year-old Wright, reported by British media to be a forklift truck driver, arrived at Ipswich magistrates' court in a police van flanked by two squad cars.

He appeared smartly dressed and flanked by police officers for the brief court hearing. He was remanded in custody to appear at the town's Crown Court on Jan. 2.

Paul Grant, Wright's lawyer, appealed for restraint from the media, which has scrutinized every twist and turn of the inquiry on television, online and in newspapers since the murders hit the headlines.

"The most important thing for people to remember is my client is presumed innocent until convicted in a court of law," he told BBC News, saying his client was "bearing up well."

The case evoked fears of Jack the Ripper, the 19th century London prostitute killer who was never found, and West Yorkshire Ripper, known as the "Yorkshire Ripper," who killed 13 women, mainly prostitutes, in northern England between 1975 and 1980.

A second man, who had been questioned since Monday, was released on police bail on Thursday pending further inquiries. Reuters

WRIGHT

SANTA AND THE DALLAS BELTER

Pfizer-month old Victoria Brandt walks while sitting for a photo with Carl Anthony, portraying Santa, Dec. 21 in a Dallas mall. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Talks end on N. Korea's nuclear weapons

BEIJING—Talks to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program concluded for the day without tangible progress, and Pyongyang said Monday it "improved its nuclear deterrent." Americans and Asian diplomats said during the days of negotiations in Beijing, the North Korean delegation used the time for discussions, not formal sessions, meaning it would be an easy after-face United Nations sanctioned Security Council resolution further isolated North Korea from the international economy. China, the host for the six-nation talks, is the country's closest ally and biggest trading partner. It also has the most influence over the regime. North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Russia—that agreed to "improve" at the earliest opportunity." An American official involved in the negotiations said the talks could resume early next year. AFP

Space shuttle touches down in Florida

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.—Space shuttle Discovery flew through gray Florida skies and safely touched down on a dramatic Space Center runway at twilight on Friday to cap a 12-day mission to continue construction of the International Space Station. Shuttle commander Mark Polansky gently rocked Discovery through just a few quick strokes over the runway just before shifting the 122-ton ship into a sweeping, 195-degree turn at 8:32 p.m. EST. Landing was originally planned for a similar spot only in Edwards, a prospect that would have cost millions of dollars and up to two months time to return the shuttle to Florida. Rules supposed to limit landing opportunity of the shuttle's home port due to concerns about rain showers. The landing marked the 53rd shuttle mission to Florida and the 54th overall. Edwards in California was ruled out due to high winds. That left only the Northrop Strip of White Sands Space Harbor in New Mexico with favorable weather forecast for the shuttle's homecoming. Discovery dispatched two cargo planes with equipment and personnel to ease Discovery back to land there. Reuters

Court cuts Exxon Valdez damages by $1B

NEW YORK—A U.S. appeals court cut $1 billion off the $4.5 billion in punitive damages owed by Exxon Mobil Corp. for the Exxon Valdez oil spill, saying the earlier penalty was too harsh compared with the economic harm caused by the 1989 spill off Alaska. The San Francisco-based U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said in a ruling issued today that it should be initially allowed to hold in light of U.S. Supreme Court decisions on punitive damages. The court said the company's pursuit action to clean up the oil and compensate fishermen and others for economic losses showed the reprehensibility of Exxon's conduct. Reuters

Security Council set to OK Iran sanctions

UNITED NATIONS—THE SECURITY Council will likely approve Secretary a slightly amended European draft resolution mandating UN sanction-related sanctions on Iran, diplomats said late Friday.

"We have decided to meet for a vote tomorrow (Saturday) at 11 a.m. (1400 GMT)" on a new, slightly amended draft resolution put forward by European sponsors, France's UN Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière told reporters after consultations of the 15-nation Security Council.

"We will take action tomorrow at 11 a.m.," Qatar's UN envoy Nasser Abdelaziz al-Nasser, who chairs the council for December, confirmed. He added the vote would follow last-minute consultations among council members.

A Western diplomat close to the talks, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the latest draft resolution would be endorsed overwhelmingly and possibly unanimously.

China's UN Ambassador Wang Guangya told reporters that he planned to consult with his government before the vote.

The vote will take place nearly two months after Britain, France and Germany first introduced a sanctions draft resolution following Iran's failure to comply with an Aug. 31 council deadline to halt its sensitive nuclear fuel work.

The European draft has been amended several times as Russia and China, which have close economic and energy ties with Tehran, demanded it be tough and likely to irk the Iranians while Washington sought a tougher one. AFP

Russia excuses self in final report on Beslan

MOSCOW—A RUSSIAN PARLIAmentary commission on Friday issued its final report on the terrorist seizure of a public school in Beslan in 2004. The report briefly highlighted law enforcement mistakes but placed blame for the hundreds of deaths on the terrorists alone.

The report's long-awaited conclusions, read aloud by the commission's chair during a session of parliament's upper house, ended more than two years of investigation into the worst terrorist act in post-Soviet Russian history.

The report suggested a laundering of the Kremlin's position on one of the most painful public episodes of President Vladimir V. Putin's administration, breaking ranks lingering questions about the events and making their authorities, in spite of many well-documented problems, had done an adequate job.

The Beslan had pledged that the special commission, stacked with politicians loyal to Putin and omitting almost entirely any public view, would establish the facts and report the truth.

But the delivery of the report's summary in a speech did little to satisfy embittered survivors and bereaved families, some of whom attended it a whiteboards meant to shield the Kremlin from responsibility for government negligence and disregard for hostages' lives.

Copies of the full report were given to the Kremlin and parliamentary leaders, but not released to the public or the news media, making it nearly impossible to evaluate the evidence upon which the commission's conclusions were based.

More than 1,100 people were taken hostage at Middle School No. 1 on Sept. 1, 2004, the first day of the academic year in Beslan, a town in North Ossetia, in southwestern Russia. The terrorists had been sent by Shamil Basayev, the fugitive leader of a group that sought the independence of Chechnya, a small Muslim republic in the Caucasus. The captors demanded that Russian forces withdraw from Chechnya and, when they have fought two wars against the separatists since 1994.

In his remarks to parliament, the chair of the special commission, Aleksandr P. Torshin, talked some of the terrorists' request "in excessible demands."

Torshin said the terrorists intentionally detonated bombs among the hostages, starting the last bomb to the surprise of Russian negotiators and commanders. NYT

Sunday SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Pleimuelaw E-mail: ps_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Get to your bookmark: Inquirer.net/sunsports/homepage.htm (SSP Edition) or (Archive)

MVP, Jinggoy unite for basketball

By Jose Mayuyo

A FITTING CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR A BASKETball-loving country starving for international action.

Business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada finally came to terms yesterday opening the door for the Philippines to regain the confidence of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and compete in the international scene.

In a closed-door (Gilas) meeting in Hong Kong, Estrada, president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, shook hands with the PLDT (Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.) top honcho on a deal that could very well end the power struggle between the BAP and Pilipinas Basketball.

"We've already reached an agreement. I have to make this sacrifice to unify basketball in the country," said Estrada in a telephone interview. "Without unity we cannot move forward."

Both parties agreed to install Pangilinan as president of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas. He replaces Edmund Africa as the BAP-and PB-tapped caretaker in Tokyo Dart would pave the way for the Fibers IB to reappear on the country.

Estrada will be the chair of the fledgling group while naming FBA dean Ricky Duyan as vice chairman (Rudolf de Padilla as secretary-treasurer and Ariel president Lito Alvarez as treasurer.

The SBP will have to notify the Philippine Olympic Committee about the developments for recognition and send a formal communication to Fiba secretary-general Patrick Baumann for the lifting of the suspension.

The only loose ends is the possibility of other BAP officials blocking the settlement crushed by Pangilinan and Ricardo.

ESTRADA

PANGILINAN

"I have to abide by the Tokyo accord. Even if the BAP doesn't want to I will be obliged to surrender for the greater good of many," said Estrada. "I have to take this move for us to compete internationally."

Estrada stressed that the BAP will have equal representation in the SBP with four committees to be headed by BAP officials.

"So far at the BAP is concerned, we're well represented in the SBP. There are four standing committees represented by majority of the BAP members," explained Estrada, who will inform the BAP members of the development.

The BAP was shredded as a member of the FIBA last year drawing the ire of the Fiba, which, in turn, barred the country from entering action in all Fiba-sanctioned tournaments.

Since then, the Philippines failed to defend its crown in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association and the 2005 Southeast Asian Games hosted by the country while Jaygee off from the Asian Championships, the qualifiers for the world championships held in the Tokyo in Japan.

Next year, the SBP is hoping to field a team in the Asian championship in Saitama, Japan. Its what could be the national athletes' ticket to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

With the development, the BAP and the PB will be dissolved as soon as the SBP gets the nod of the Office in turned upon by both groups during the Fiba congress last September.

The three-man panel, which was tasked by the Fiba to create the SBP along with the Semenda, four of the group's contributors and his three-and appointment of officers, will also be disbanded.

The panel was composed of Pangilinan, former PB president Bienvenido Salazar and former BAP president Jerry Lluz.

Lluz stepped down as BAP head and was replaced by Estrada about two months ago that delayed the unification talks. Atienza, on the other hand, had resigned as athletic director of the College of St. Benilde and lost his representative in the PBAA and the PB.

"The BAP and PB will cease to exist because of the Tokyo accord the moment both parties agree," said Estrada, who left for Hong Kong Friday morning. And hence with Atienza (Leonardo Al Pamilio) and not Pangilinan at dinner to settle the issue.

"I have to admit that we were there doing [our] for this issue. I have yet to read the by-laws of the SBP to know the extent of my functions as chairman," he added.

WHAT'S INSIDE
Bayron, Villaroman notch easy victories /A22
Wizards, Sixers bury streaks; Phoenix loses /A23
Wesley So youngest ever national champ at 13 /A24

CJH Chairman's Cup set Dec. 28

BAGUIO CITY—AN EXCITING YEAR-ENDER tournament awaits club members at the Camp John Hay Golf Club announced on Saturday the staging of the annual Chairman's Cup here Dec. 28 to 29.

More than 250 members, guests and PBAs are participating in the 18-hole, medal play competition to win the mantle of the challenging par-72, up-and-down plus two-day event of Atty. Eric Recto, according to fellow Hay governor-manager Jess Hechanova.

"The Chairman's Cup will be the crowning glory of Camp John Hay's wonderful year of yet successfully hosting numerous events like the 37th Fil-Am Golf, Junior Leather Championship and Corporate Cup," Hechanova said.

Club chair Robert John L. Sobrepeña will also be on the tournament which has several VIP games, including former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos. Tournament fee is P15,000, inclusive of green fees consisting of four rounds of bogey, dinner and a raffle ticket. Call the CJHGC front desk at (074) 442-2561.

ALCANO: Four wins, zero losses.

Alcano enters kayo stage in Super Cup

BEIJING WORLD CHAMPION ROMNICK ALcano blasted Chang Sung-lin of Taiwan, 7-0, yesterday to become the first player to reach the knockout stage of the 2008 Disney Asia Super Cup at the Living Mall in Taipei, Taiwan.

The 24-year-old Alcano finished with a 4-2 win-loss record in Group B.

Among Alcano's victims were 2006 International Pool Tour World 8-ball runner-up Roland Trum of the United States (7-4) and 2005 Challenge of Champions ruler Thomas Engert of Germany (7-2). Alcano yielded to former world 9-ball champion Cho Sung-jung of Taiwan (1-7) on Friday.

Yesterday, Alcano beat 2005 World Junior runner-up 17-year-old Hajikazu Hirano of Japan (7-1) and downed to 2008 PBC champion Wu Chia Ching (5-7). The devastating win over Chang sent him into the quarterfinal round which starts today.

Chang finished with a similar 4-2 record, but is waiting for the results of the matches between Wu (4-1) and Hong (2-2).

Engert and Morris are out of contention with 2-3 cards.

Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Efren "Efren" Reyes was very confident that Alcano will win the Super Cup crown.

Mel Pogoy, the 2004 PPC winner, and competitor Jose "Jimmy" Parica were battling in Group A at presstime. Pogoy leads Parica 2-1 record while Parica carries a 3-1 slate. Parica is also scheduled to play last Friday's Chinese in the last round.

The top four players from each group advance to the quarterfinals. Matches for Saturday, December

Bayron, Villaroman post easy victories

By Marang B. Castillo

CAGAYAN DE ORO, LAGUNA—IT COULD be said that Bradley Jay Bayron and Jhonnel Villaroman earned the first date for 2008 Philippine Amateur Golf championship was the biggest title of his career.

The 20-yearold from Agusan del Norte defended crowned champion and Tubo native was expected to be a threat out of the Cagayan de Oro Golf Club.

And it was a far departure from all the hard numbers the 27-year-old fought had to get to the finals for the first time.

Considered Villaroman, the veteran who has not had much success of title, considered a day of fumbled opportunities after bumbowling his way past world junior champ Dodie Salina, 3-and-4, for the women's title.

Villaroman was salvaging against Andrea, wrapping up her opponent Nicole Ann Reed to regain her place in the spot.

"Yes, this is my biggest win and it's nice to finally get all the way this time," Bayron, whose closest finish to winning this tournament came in 2006 when he lost to Jhoni Dangcuta in the semifinals, said in Filipino.

Bayron, regarded as the top amateur in the land after Juvic Pagunsan turned pro at the start of the year, started validating this distinction by winning the first two holes in the morning 18.

He took that same 2-hole lead in opening up the afternoon round before Hoenig it with birdies on the 22nd, 29th and 30th holes, the last winning after a gutsy par save on the 37th.

Bayron, whose finished ninth caster in the semifinals against Philippine Amateur Golf Federation of the Philippines product Mario Fernando, scored a routine par 4 on the 40th hole, which the 18-year-old Asiatic lingered to close the match.

The 29-year-old Villaroman, meanwhile, announced her return as a force, winning the other version of the national championship 21 years after she won the SP Ladies at Manila Golf.

Villaroman couldn't have seen herself in the 17-year-old Salina, who now represents this country in international campaign tournaments much as the same way this Carmelite did close to 20 years ago.

She's had a lot of youthful love torture getting to Andrea in the finals, first handing out torture Pinkies, 2-up, in the first round, before outlasting Asian Games teammate Ann Espinosa, 1-up in 22 holes on Friday.

Villaroman was also sharp in downing Bambee Ann Bay, 4-and-3 in the semis and took that form against Andrea who looked like she never had a chance.

Winning three of the first six holes in the morning was the jumpshot that Villaroman to drain the victory.

FIGHT AFTERMATH

GTK asks Cojuangco to fire him as POC special assistant

OFFICIALLY, THE INCIDENT WHERE top officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee nearly came to blows ancient history.

Built over the closed doors, dust the tape recorders and talk to those present during the tensioned executive committee meeting of the POC, though, and you'll get the whole picture—one that includes childish name-calling, juvenile name-splashing and a request from the controversial Go Teng Kok that he be fired from his "special" post.

Go, who has decided not to talk about it and resolved to moving members," POC spokesperson Ana Pormanes told the Inquirer. "It was all resolved."

The debacle of the incident aired, however, a controversy beyond resolution.

The skirmish involved Go, his arbitrator chair, POC first vice president Rep. Michael Pantaleon, Swimming Association of the Philippines (SAP) and POC deputy secretary general Jonne Padilla Gamez. Those present confirmed that no resident indeed happened besides Go's post details.

Nobody wanted their names involved but several sources said the incident was initiated by Pantaleon, who reportedly "lit up" Go after the latter allegedly called him a "bobo" (idiot).

GO TENG KOK

PANTALEON

Go then reportedly let all of them and the POC officials blasted out "Wow Ang bobo (they're like a navy)" to Pantaleon. In, who is from stood up and rushed toward the revealed the scuffle.

The heated confrontation was patronized from nearbyings, but most agreed to get a glass of water and subdued it all to Go's direction.

At that point, Andanda took a swing at Go from across the table but missed his mark before Lopez, Villanueva and POC deputy ato gen Mark Joseph separated intervened.

A memo was called, said the sources, and Pormentilla walked out of the meeting. He later came back for the POC Chairman Peter also asked about the meeting which Go no longer attended.

When smoke cleared, Go asked Gamez to go to the line as open and assistant if he is already a liability to him." But he was told that resigning his post must come personally from him and that Cojuangco should not be put in a situation where he would make a decision for him.

Several SEA heads, however, felt that Go should relinquish his position "for the federation." One NSA president even blasted him to no avail player "who should have a statement to be safe, trained and he's ready to believe."

Andanda said the incident only showed that most POC executive committee members "no longer trust or love" him.

Go maintained that he will not step down as Cojuangco's special assistant, saying that doing so would make him appear "guilty."

Joseph, who was taking the minutes of the meeting, learned that Go, Gamez has been calling for a process of choosing a "good housekeeping" inside the POC family.

Watching and contributing to this affairs is clearly identified as a threat. Joseph: "So Peping is taking different action and sincere compliment with the Olympic value of fair play in all aspects of sports leadership."

PBA shuts door on one-sided trade deals

By Marang B. Castillo

TO PREVENT MASQUEE PLAYERS FROM being shipped to teams for a song like several recent transactions, the "sabo" of the PBA Commissioner's Office has turned into approval for a guideline that would curb one-sided deals from ever happening again.

Commissioner Noli Eala is expected to clean up a Restricted Trading List that will be comprised of players who can be traded only by teams also in the list.

Those players will be ranked based on their skills (statistical points rankings), longevity (years of playing), stature and marketability.

Who would be of deliberation, the Board of Governors have agreed to limit the spread to one, the RTL with the objective of ensuring a fair and balanced trading arrangements," Eala said in a statement issued yesterday.

The guidelines is an obvious offshoot of at least two lopsided trades that happened before and during the on-going Philippine Cup, where players like Asi Taulava, Danny Seigle and Jay Miguel traded up their respective scenes by giving up practically nothing in return.

Billy Ellamar, Rafi Reyes and the rights to Rudy Barfield were acquired by the Gin Kings through April, while a deal in the middle of the week moved Cola a couple more months, Dondon Hontiveros and Jay Miguel. Since teams are barred from directly engaging in trades among each other.

Coaches gave up third-string players Hector Pessumal, Kevin Ferrer, Khasim Mirza and Art Dela Cruz to get Hontiveros and Barfield, right to the Express to get the rest of what, a deal that raised more eyebrows among the other members but one which was supposed by Eala just the same.

Although it was not a perfect trade, Eala understood the reasons behind the transactions.

Jun Miguel, meanwhile, acquired Pennel Jaddaoui and Lordy Tejada in a three-team deal which had the Bowmen going up only reserve guard Pedro Balendez and their first and second round picks for next year's Draft.

Aside from eliminating the perception of one-sided trades or outright rush buy-outs of players, the RTL also ensures that no team can load up on marquee players while likewise guaranteeing the marketability of all individuals.

Forest Hills complete WGAP romp

FOREST HILLS SWEPT ITS FOUR MATCHES on the last day to upset the favorites and capture the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines (WGAP) Cup medal play played at the Forest Hills golf course on a rain-soaked weekend.

Racing to the afternoon shots hurried, the pairs of Bea Bunda/Annie Que, Lesley Bang/Eileen Lu, Vicky Pepito/Phebe Ohnesorge and Stella Mojaco/Carmencita Ortiz-Hizon rode to pull off the triple-win for host Hills.

The Hizon-hosted outing at The Country Club pairs the Forest Hills ladies four points and a three-round total of eight, edging the host-and rapside Manila Southwoods and defeating bronze and four points, respectively.

Southwoods, however, topped the eight-leg WGAP Cup circuit to lead the qualifiers into the season-ending event, led the first round at the Orchard using the best-ball play with four points and remained in the front and after the second round (aggregate) at Canlubang with five points.

But Southwoods made only two points in the third round and Mabitag got four to settle for second and third place. Tagaytay Highlands placed fourth at 7.5 points and Sta. Elena a respective fifth with 5 points.

It wasn't for first time that a team outside the Elena and Alabang won the WGAP Cup. Alabang won Baclaran and Sta. Elena twice in the first three campaigns of the WGAP Cup.

The others who tore across for Forest Hills were Cecile Tan, Jen Cabochan, Mimi Tan, Mel Trinidad, Lena Ty, Mercy-Bee Ermil-Ran and Susan Sy.

Forest Hills also linked the feat of Alabang for the consecutive ownership of the WGAP Cup trophy. Winners the past two years, the Alabang ladies were gunning for a third straight win that could have won them the perpetual trophy.

HONORS: at the Forest Hills course display their trophy.

Jinggoy makes basketball unification possible

IN HUDDLE

Beth Cela

BAP PRESIDENT Sen. Jinggoy Estrada was beside a custard in Hong Kong when he made the official announcement yesterday afternoon.

"The BAP and the SBP have just reached an accord, he said, at long last ending Philippine basketball.

It happened right there in the Grand Cordis Hotel at the time of the year, last Friday, after Jinggoy was given the go-ahead by the bandleaderssss to travel "on an urgent matter."

* * *

Jinggoy arrived in Hong Kong Friday morning, found lunch in downtown Mercure Hotel beside Al Pacific of PLDT one-to-one at noon, then had dinner later in the day with PLDT/SBP chairman Manny V. Pangilinan, PBA chairman Pato Gregorio and Al at the Peking Kitchen.

Al was a schoolmate of the senator in elementary and high school. They are close friends, with Jinggoy often dropping over night at the Pinaklass. They also played basketball together.

Who is the better cager?

"Al's definitely taller, but I'm the better dribbler," Jinggoy joked.

* * *

After the sumptuous Chinese lunch and the serious talks that were with it, everybody stood and shook hands to seal the fate of Philippine basketball. So the bet is:

"We've agreed for MVP to be premium, with per chairman and Ricky Vargas as my reps," said Jinggoy.

Air 21's Leo Alvarez has been offered the post of treasurer and Al Panlilio, the most coveted executive directorship.

"Now having custody might keep supe honorees from BAP-patronized hong dungeons. I had to do this to abide by the Tokyo commandpost."

Jinggoy said he had to make a sacrifice to make basketball, so we can move forward, have the Fiba ban lifted, and compete internationally.

"Hindi naman para sa akin ito (and) para sa kapwa ko ang libre libreng mga inuman (approximated as basketball). I have nothing to gain/lose it personally."

Jinggoy was scheduled to fly out of Hong Kong, 6 p.m. yesterday, headed for Manila.

* * *

With this development, two basketball personalities, sinning my long list of resposidents, immediately got their Christmas wish.

One of them is Mariwasa Granite's Mike Saso, someone who asked Santa for the unification of Philippine basketball, "and for the country to have a strong representation in international competitions, perhaps even winning several golds."

The second is Ricky Vargas who also wished for unity in basketball, a successful PBA season and "a long family vacation to bond and recharge with my wife, kids and my good daughter Angel."

Mike's second wish is for his PBL team "to have the heart and the willingness to be a back-to-back PBL championship."

Perhaps Ricky's fourth but about wish is also for his PBA team to win a second title, only he was a bit shy to say it.

* * *

LOOPHOLE: Some people have reported sightings of former Toronto cager Agustin Aguilar who's supposed to be enrolled in a division CODEDCAA school. This went on for centuries, until one of our more veteran scribes decided to call Agustin's father Peter in the United States to check. Peter was in Florida at the time of the US Free Speed of the Dopplegroper? It would be Agustin's double that had been masquerading here in Manila, perhaps due to an intense desire to return to the Philippines. Maybe... Like his namesake, Most Venerable is also an MVP at PLDT. The Most Valuable Personnel? The 10,000 veterans of 31 Presidents has been appointed alternate governor of Sulu 'N Tawi... In line with his "Pencil or Pencil" project, Bobby Ranit's Jojo Daandi gave away 1,000 pencils and calendars to the people of Seventh Signatures Elementary School in Tampisi, Pulilan, Bulacan.

ASEAN UNIGAMES

Uy bags RP's third swimming gold medal

HENDRICK UP POINTED SEE THIRD gold medal and fellow University of the Philippines (UP) swimmers Luisa Dacoscay added a second to her collection as the UAAP-RP squad kept its points in the 2006 Asean University Games in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Uy won the men's 50 meters backstroke and anchored the 4x100 medley team alongside Michaelmarc Tuadla (Ateneo), Timary Chua (UP) and Arl. Trey Lagcuiles (UE) to victory for his third gold medal after the 100 meters freestyle in the biennial event organized by the Sunsea Swimming Sports Council.

Dacoscay was also victorious in the women's 50 meters backstroke for her second gold medal after the 100 meters backstroke she contributed to the UAAP-RP team which is headed by Speedo and Hapee.

Ateneo's representation in the UAAP board Jenjen Cajucom also relayed that others medals were clinched on the third day of competitions by 18's Timmy Chua (100 freestroke) and Ateneo's Nikki Jarolaga (200 breaststroke).

The team of Gunsang Gwo-Dog (Ateneo), Liane Marquez (University of Santo Tomas) and Nikki Jarolaga (Ateneo) also settled for the bronze medal of the 4x100 medley relay on Day 4.

Thailand, however, was unstoppable with a gold, silver-bronze haul of 23-8-6. The Philippines remained in second place with 8-8-8, followed by Indonesia (3-7-5), Vietnam (3-5-11) and Singapore (0-2-10). Laos and Malaysia have no medals so far.

VINCE CARTER, the high-flying swingman of the New Jersey Nets, soars in the air as he prepares to slam home one his trademark dunks against the Los Angeles Lakers in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The Lakers, though, were to ones who scored the victory. AFP

Wizards, Sixers bury streaks

Phoenix loses, Philly wins–finally

PHOENIX, ARIZONA—GILBERT Arenas scored 34 points and the Washington Wizards beat Phoenix 144-138 in overtime here Friday, snapping the Suns' club-record 15-game National Basketball Association win streak.

It was the second four-on-one game ideal for Arenas in his NBA career, eclipsed only by his 60-point performance against the Los Angeles Lakers five days before. Arenas also hit 11 points against Sacramento on Thursday.

Washington's Caron Butler scored 30 of his 34 points in overtime to foil the Suns, who had 42 points from Steve Nash in a losing cause.

The Wizards have made a habit of being NBA streak busters, this time ending the longest NBA win streak in six years. In 2005, it was the Wizards who snapped a 15-game victory run by the Los Angeles Lakers.

And earlier this month the Wizards snapped a 12-game Dallas win streak. Only three teams in NBA history have snapped two win streaks of at least 12 games in single season.

Arenas, who sank 13-of-27 shots from the field, took his revenge on one of the men who dropped him from the US squad that played in Japan at the Fiba Championships in August.

Arenas had something personal to prove to Suns coach Mike D'Antoni and club executive Jerry Colangelo, part of the USA Basketball staff that made Arenas the final player cut from the World Championship roster.

Arenas had said he wanted to cram the snub by scoring 50 points against the NBA clubs whose personnel had a role in his dismissal.

"I said 50. I got 50," Arenas said.

The Suns endured a difficult day simply to take the court, having been snowed in at Denver by a blizzard.

"We figured if we could just run, get them tired, they would die out from standing around so long," said Arenas, whose team surged in an early 11-point lead.

In Boston, Massachusetts, Andre Iguodala scored a career-high 31 points and added nine assists to spark Philadelphia past Denver 96-

83 here Friday, snapping the 76ers' 13-game losing streak.

On the same night as the Denver Nuggets defeat of fellow Denver, the star guard traded away by the 76ers this week, the league-worst 76ers snapped their slump with their first triumph since Dec. 6.

Kevin Ollie had 14 points, eight assists and six rebounds for the 76ers, who had not lost 13 in a row since the 1996-1997 season but had won only one NBA game since Nov. 26.

The 76ers, 6-18, had lost all seven games since Iverson was benched while management tried to swing a trade deal. They had also lost 10 in a row on the road.

Detroit's Final Pistons is averaging 26.6 points, 7.4 rebounds and 4.3 assists but he was out with a left foot injury.

"I want two Jews," 76ers coach Maurice Cheeks said. "I thought that was just a great team effort by all of our guys. We all talked about hanging in there to start this game.

When 12-2 Cleveland visited Toronto, we were looking for the champagne when we were into the locker room."

AFP

Iverson a loser in his debut with the Nuggets

DENVER—ALLEN IVERSON LIKES playing alongside his new teammates, can't believe how much snow there is in Denver after a recent blizzard and thinks he looks pretty good in a Nuggets uniform.

More than anything he's glad his first game with the Nuggets is coming to an end in a 103-99 loss to Sacramento on Friday night.

"I just want to come, try to help and try to contribute," said Iverson, who finished with 23 points and 10 assists in more than 39 minutes of play. "I'm a basketball player so I just get out on the court and play basketball."

Iverson, acquired from Philadelphia on Tuesday, sat next to assistant coach Mike Dunlap, waiting for Denver coach George Karl to put him in, which he finally did with 3:20 left in the first quarter.

After that, Iverson never came out.

"He said he's going to play one 20-to-25 minutes," said Iverson, who shared a seat at the podium with his 9-year-old son, Deuce, after the game. "Coach knows what type of competitor I am, its just for me play."

He was asked if it felt weird being in a different uniform and he grinned.

"I liked the uniforms even when I was playing with the Sixers," he said. "I always said these were the best uniforms in the league. I feel like a kid in the candy store when I get to put it on. I may sound crazy, but I'm excited already."

Iverson showed he's lagged out on skills—it took him 1 hour, 45 minutes to drive roughly 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the airport due to traffic—Iverson said he was energized by the crowd.

"That's all I wanted—to be welcomed," Iverson said. "And just try to fit in the best way I can and just give them what they thought all I can give them, giving them everything I've been giving the Sixers for 10 years."

His first basket with the Nuggets was a 15-foot fadeaway with 1:38 left in the first quarter. He free-glass point count in the second when he threw a lob to DeMarr Johnson for a dunk.

Before the contest, Kirby Jha wasn't nervous, rode out in owner owner on a snowmobile, took off his tuxedo coat and removed Iverson's familiar No. 3 in a Nuggets jersey.

Iverson was able to wear No. 3 thanks to Johnson, who gladly surrendered the jersey once he learned Iverson was coming to town.

"I think he...It looks a lot better on him," Johnson said. "He's a great player. Getting that number I don't deem much with it."

While the national anthem was sung, there were 15 television and still cameras all in Iverson's face.

Iverson showed his physical shortly after arriving at the Pepsi Center about an hour before the game against the Kings. He went up to the Nuggets' practice facility to shoot some jumpers and then came out on the floor.

AP

IVERSON: Best uniform in the league. AFP

CHARLTON MCALLISTER: Outlook 105 - Sept 06

Golden Gate 117 - Orlando 108; Indiana 120 - New York 104; Chicago 82 - LA Lakers 80; New Jersey 103 - Houston 97; San Antonio 95 - Toronto 92; Memphis 87 - Cleveland 82; Boston 112 - Minnesota 111; Philadelphia 96 - Denver 83; Dallas 113 - LA Clippers 83; Sacramento 103 - Denver 99; Boston 103 - Portland 102; Washington 144 - Phoenix 138 (OT)

AF3 launches new series

JUST TWO MONTHS AFTER ITS HIGHLY successful 2006 series, the Asian Bowling Three Corporation will hold a Pacific Series starring new squads that will take competing directions in Cebu, Mindanao and Cagayan.

The Pacific Series will serve as a bridge between the circuit that ended last November and the 2007 season that has been moved to the "winter months" to enable more European drivers to compete.

The first years of the regular series will be held in December 2007, with the final season in May 2008.

Four legs make up the Pacific Series, with each leg consisting of three rounds, starting with the Initial Leg on Jan. 20-21 in the Zhuhai International Circuit in China. After that, the series goes to Melbourne on March 10-11, Dubai Park in Sydney on April 21-22, and back to Zhuhai on June 23-24.

The Melbourne stop will see the AF3 providing a support race to the Australian F1 championship, proving the Asian-nation hopping race has finally found a niche in the world of motor sport.

"We are excited at the prospects of joining the Australian Championship events in Melbourne and Sydney and we hope it marks the beginning of a long term association," said AF3 managing director Mark Goddard.

The winner of the Pacific Series will earn a sponsored drive to the 2007 Macau Formula Three Grand Prix, Jenson Button of England, who topped the 2006 AF3 Series, finished 12th overall in the race's Macau race.

This early, various teams have expressed great interest in competing in the Pacific Series, among them Jet Motorsport, Team Motorsport, Speedcraft-Asia, Jenson F3 and Shell Helix Racing F3.

SPORTSWATCH

Pacific captures PICAA title

PACIFIC DEFENDERS BEATED EDWARDIANS 82-69 IN GAME 38-67, AND rendered the title in the 2006 PICAA Open basketball tournament at the La Consolacion College gym in Mandaluyong, Manila. Jeff Sanders and Herbert Bradley provided the 1-2 punch for Pacific. Sanders played his best game ever with 20 points, including three 3-point shots, while Bradley was the top gun for the Kings of coaches Fatima Rademacher and Jane Evangelista and manager Dante Dee as Elite 8 team with 17-16 remaining. Out in one Muñoz, a 6-foot-1 standout from the AC-SPT Lightnings, who returns for the endgame. Muñoz, who once visited tournament MVP scored one of his 14 points in the final 1:16.

New schedule for GCAP derby

THE COCONUT SERIES OF THE GOLDEN AMBO COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines (GCAP) 6-week derby will begin on Dec. 28 at San Juan Coliseum. 2000. The new schedule was approved yesterday by the GCAP executive committee. A total of 15 derbies will be contested by GCAP for the 2006-2007 cock season. Other schedules: Jan. 31 and 171; Feb. 21; March 7 and 28; April 11; May 2, 16 and 30. Grand participants may also join all GCAP derbies for a discounted entry fee of P15,000. Regular members' entry fee is P20,000. GCAP members include Sony Herrera, Rudy Hilario, secretary Bill Patrick Antonio, Eric Alba Nava, Jet and Joel Fernando, Jaypee Brothers, Mandaluyong Brothers, Boy Bicsan, Pepe Cojuangco, Ramon Ang, Ronnie Poe, Tessie Sytangco, Miguel Belmonte, Danny Ozaeta, Bobby Muñoz, Louie Cua, Obi Ballosa, Mike and Nestor Pichay, Jade Vigo, Vicor Gonzalez, Jones Yap Lim Bonoto, Tobby Nicolas and Tonny Castro. Pacific Rim and Boy de Roxas. Meanwhile, the GCAP International 8-cock derby kicks off on Jan. 20, 28 and 31, with P1 million in guaranteed prize.

Rizal, Metro cockers clash at Cainta

THE FIRE COCKERS OF METRO MANILA AND RIZAL CONVENE ALL GENTRY for Cainta Coliseum on Dec. 29 for the New Year Encounter 4-Cock Derby. Entrance fee is P5,000 in guaranteed prize awards for champions, runner-up and Sweet Meat... Five event will start at 12 n.m. The contest will champion will bring home a Dodge Dakota motorcycle. Entry fee is P7,500 and reinforcement fee is P5,000. For inquiries, contact 0915-3224, 2804-0616 or 0920-6230511 (Arnold Jimenez).

Yankees sign Cuban infielder for 4 years

NEW YORK—CUBAN DEFECTOR Jose Miranda said the New York Yankees agreed Friday to a $2 million, four-year contract.

He played with three Del Rio in Cuba from 2002-06, and the Yankees said he hit .305 there with 27 homers, 72 walks and 107 strikeouts.

"He's got some juice to hit for from the left side. We like his size," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "He'll start in the Florida State League and we'll bring him along. We're going to respect the transition process."

Miranda, a 23-year-old former teammate of ex-Yankees pitcher Jose Contreras, grew up in Consolacion del Sur, Cuba, and lives in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

Team officials has impressed not scouts with his talent and his strength," Yankees scouting supervisor Damon Oppenheimer said.

Also, Japanese pitcher Kei Igawa took a physical Friday, part of the process of completing a $20 million, five-year contract.

AP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Sunday SPORTS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2006
E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

WBC suspends Pacman-Barrera fight purse offer

WORLD BOXING COUNCIL PRESIDENT Jose Sulaiman has announced that the sanctioning body has suspended the purse offer set on Jan. 12 for the mandatory title defense of WBC super featherweight champ Marco Antonio Barrera against Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao due to the Filipino icon's current legal situation.

"The WBC is currently reconsidering this situation and will continue doing so until the clarification of the facts for the fore negotiations, and will keep everybody informed after the holidays," Sulaiman said in his report to the media.

SULAIMAN

Pacquiao, who announced the other day that he is willing to give Barrera a rematch to even things up, is currently in the middle of a personal legal row between Dorie Dela Cruz and Jinkee Pacquiao over the latter's alleged Golden Boy Promotions and Bob Arum's Top Rank.

De la Hoya was the first to sign up Pacquiao to a seven-fight deal in mid-September although Arum had claimed after the Nov. 18 Pacquiao-Morales bout that his first bind came up with a deal with Pacquiao's MP Promotions to promote Pacquiao's bouts in the next few years.

Legal observers are of the opinion that Golden Boy Promotions has the edge in the race to promote Pacquiao, and Pacquiao's latest announcement of a possible Barrera fight in April has solidified GBP's claim.

Earlier this week, there have also been reports of promoter Don King pursuing Pacquiao's services, and that the wire-haired fling is reportedly calling Bisaya on a daily basis offering big sum of money in order to get the rest of Pacquiao.

King, however, has denied these media reports in his press release, saying: "I have not called nor have I spoken with Manny Pacquiao, his trainer or anyone in his camp. I have no idea where these reports have emanated from, but I can assure everyone the media accounts are absolutely false in their entirety and have no merit whatsoever."

Meanwhile, Pacquiao is still on his way to being picked by the world's largest boxing publications and scribes as boxing's "Fighter of the Year" following unanimous wins over Erik Morales and Oscar Larios this year.

The cancellation of the top honors seems to be getting pretty one-sided, as in most of Pacquiao's recent bouts, that fight scribe Michael Woods of thesweetscience.com wrote a story titled, "Is Pacquiao the Only Sensible Fighter of 2006?" Sabrina L. Zagamboing, contributor

So youngest ever RP champ at 13

WESLEY SO: Country's brightest chess prospect.

Final Standings by Actual and Ratings

Top 1 to Board defense represent the country in ORC Asian Championships

Top 1-5—48 Wesley So (FM/2606) 7½
1.0—48 Yousif Salem (FM/2600) 7½
4.5—48 Jayson Light- (FM/2597) 6½
4.0—GB Ruel Neupa (FM/2621) 6½
4.5—48 Jhon Dimabiliw(FM/2615) 6½
4.0—GB Nelson Mariano Jr (FM/2621) 6½
4.5—48 Edwin Joseph de Ramos (FM/2597) 6½
6.0—8/Tom Rosek (FM/2621)

WESLEY SO SENDS ANOTHER

story to his growing list of achievements by topping the 2nd Pampanga "Bambi" Pichay & Mendoza Open Championships and Clarin Challenge at the SM City in Manila yesterday.

In the process, he already the country's youngest Olympian and international master at 12, also became the youngest ever national champion at 13.

Barely a week before his 14th birthday on Dec. 30, So finished with 7½ points and claim the Pichay Cup and the top prize of P150,000.

In solo second place with 7½ points is 2003 Asian Zonal 3.2b champion Ibl Ronald Dableo, who made a 15-move draw with top seed Grandmaster Mark Paragua in their English Opening duel.

Dableo, an ATo officer from the Philippine Air Force under the wings of Col. Danilo Mendoza, went home with the runner-up prize worth P50,000.

The 22-year-old Paragua, who drew with his rookie, notched 6.5 points, the same output of IM Darwin Laylo, IM Oliver Dimabiliw, IM Yves Sutnio, NM Arlito Joseph de Ramos and GM Nelson Mariano II. Each of them received P34,857.

However, after the tie break was applied, Laylo, Paragua and Dimabiliw earned the right to join So and Dableo in the men's Asian Zonals set Jan. 10-19 in Vietnam.

The female qualifiers were Gladys Bermudez, WIM Beverly Mendoza and WIM Kimberly Jane Cinamar, who notched 5.0 points each.

Odti Eugene Sora and Rogelio Antonio Jr. witnessed the final round and were happy about his performance.

"Exceptional a Wesley Ord, malayo ang mararating ng batang yan," said the 12-time national champion Antonio, runner-up in the International Tournament in Michigan, USA, recently.

"Wesley has really gone far," said Sora. "He's really very good.

In the Challengers section, National Master Jerry Hultado, Julius Dimaporo and Tomas Herrera emerged tied at the top with 7.5 points each. Alf Elacion Bernardino, contributor

Juvenile Championship: 5-sided fight looms today

By Mucogllo Cuello

GAMBOA, GATE—A FIVE-SIDED fight looms in the richest race for two-year-olds where the P1 million, seasoning Philracom-sponsored Juvenile Championship is flagged off today at the San Lazaro Leisure Park here.

Filly Ty Tweety Sir and Sir Lulu, a colt, are expected to be out off at the slight pinky with compliers Marlo Mas and Norman and Cris Mate's Soul also highly regarded to be ever-spread over the mile.

A winner of all but one of six career starts, Ty Tweety Sir, a daughter of GI stallion Principality out of Play It by Ear, will be handled by Mitos Salvador when she gets for the P1.6 million-championship prize.

Sir Lulu will be reined in by crewmember Ernesto T. Esquin, with the Quezon cause out of Gluelle bay was coming into the race, the winner of his last three starts four-for-will-use. 1,000 meters for the first time in his career.

Marlo Mas, after winning a leg of the Juvenile Series race Nemus, has so far had a roller-coaster campaign in the past few months. his last win coming on Oct. 1 in a regular race also over this track.

Ace Jonathan Hernandez rides Marcho Mas, a natural stayer who has forced his hand when there's no one in the field to chase.

And that would be what Nemus will bring on this race, when the chestnut colt by Sam Sun Tiger out of Arriba Queen salutes course favorite Esquwen named after close friend Manny Pacquiao salutes the mark.

Jerry Mirena, who just together an impressive string of victories last week at the Santa Ana in Makati, will be Nemus's partner.

Red Rain is 4-2B join as One Black Soul, to be handled by Lord Santos, runs in the SLLP for the first time in his career.

Lucio Einston LD (Apollidor), Dynamic One Chronicled (Bobby Abrahan), whose Val D'Aosta pilots, round out the entries.

The racing season winds up in the last two weeks of the year, with the Santa Ana hosting the Classic Championship next weekend where the finest all-rounder, last by Presidential Gold Cup winner Red Spicy, will participate.

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Beaming Ilocos to the world via its cuisine /B4

Sunday BIZ
Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Esdicul

Building a jewelry enterprise to last

Five kids work to continue legacy started by parents 40 years ago

VICENTE and Milagros Dayrit

By Doris C. Dorisio

IT ALL STARTED WITH A BASKET OF LOOSE pearls an enterprising pinay teacher got from her husband as "pasalubong" after a trip from Japan, out of which she fashioned fine jewelry with the help of a local goldsmith. These creations caught the fancy of her friends, who became her first customers.

Thus was how trading ran Vicente "Ting" and Milagros Dayrit got into the jewelry business 40 years ago, giving them its Milalay Awards.

Encouraging her knack at creating beautiful jewelry, Ting bankrolled the fledgling business, which he named Milalay which means Dhays Day or Aunt or Miss. The enterprise took off from the garage of the couple's home in Forbes Park, which became the first workshop.

The late Bernardo Poe Jr. and his wife Susan Roces were one of the very first to order wedding bands from Mila's little workshop her then sister-in-law in 1968. Milalay was also commissioned to provide crowns for international and local beauty pageants.

As demand for Milalay's unique pieces of jewelry grew, the couple was able to set up their first store in the lobby of what is now the Commercial Center in 1969.

Ting and Mila passed away a decade ago, but their five children—Jacqueline, Michelle, Mark, Christine and Yvonne—have chosen to operate from their parents' strength

FROM one shop, the store now has eight outlets

from each other to bring this enterprise to greater heights. To this day, the Dayrit children refer to Milalay's beginnings not as a story of entrepreneurial success but as a beautiful tale of love.

Their parents' example was enough active lesson, but the second generation Dayrits have been working hard to excel in this craft. In the recent 8th Philippine Fine Jewelry Design Competition, Milalay bagged two grand awards—in the wedding and plain gold categories, the second year in a row that the enterprise won top honors from this contest.

Milalay has also grown. It now operates eight jewelry stores, the newest of which is the branch in The Block in SM North Edsa. The others are in Makati, Alabang, Marikina and Pasay.

It wasn't a walk in the park for the second-generation Dayrits to navigate the business after their parents passed away. In fact, there was a lull in Milalay's expansion a few years after being hit by a double whammy—a robbery of their store in the old Greenhills in 1996 and losing both of their parents to cancer in 1997.

"We sat down as a family and decided to map our how to carry on the legacy that our parents left us," Milalay Jewels president Michelle Dayrit-Gilbert says in an interview.

"All five of us have our own interests but at the same time these different talents and visions are able to help in the business," she says.

Family course

The Dayrits went through a one-year family entrepreneurship course with the help of mentor Andy Bernardo (who wrote the book "Entrepreneur Helpline" and was one of the pioneers of the Master in Entrepreneurship course at the Asian Institute of Management) in order to synchronize family dynamics. Fortune (the business sense) and easy on a new strategies to grow the business.

"Right after they died, the economy also went down. It was very scary. We had a big adjustment period. We had to take time to heal our own individual pains and grievances and realized it was time to put our act together," Dayrit-Gilbert says. "We finally jelled together, learned to divide the work and channel our individual talents and skills," she stresses.

Christine, who chairs the country's Chinese

Industrial estate to process its own garbage

Taps firm to recycle 813.42 tons of waste a month

By Gerry Lirio

A SCAVENGER IN Davao, Caviar, knows that the spoiled electric wires, broken screwdriver, and appliances come from the nearby First Cavite Industrial Estate. It is an easy thing to say. The garbage you throw reveals who you are.

For an industrial zones like First Cavite, host to some 90 big companies producing and trading almost everything from electric wires to appliances, from toilet papers to gloves, from plastic and purses to shelf stuff, from wire to trains—the least part, which is more selling, is how and where to throw it.

For The First Cavite, companies inside the First Cavite Industrial Estate have decided to outsource its garbage problem and make the lives out of it. Two months ago, it commissioned Ecowaste, a company of microbiologists, chemists, and microbiologists, to collect, process, recycle, and resell the estate's own trash for a two-year contract.

First Cavite is one of the country's six processing zones. It is located on a 134.5 hectare industrial subdivision in Tanza built to service all basic needs of any investor. It is one of the few left to medium scale industries among its locators are Interface paints, Cambridge Electronics, Emerald Bottling, Sanmix, Shell Mix, Sea Express, Rohi Philippines, and all of them dispose different kinds of trash in huge volume each day.

The combined volume is about 813.42 tons a month, broken down as follows: 71.19 tons, garbage; paint sludge, 0.48 tons; wastewater sludge, 682.61 tons; quartz cube, 0.1 tons; product residue (biological sink) 0.09 tons; other wastes, 11.85 tons; sand, 1 tons; glass mat, 45 tons.

Shell Cork accounts for the biggest volume at 17.15 tons while Rohi Philippines is among the smallest at 0.61 tons, both each month.

Ecowaste started operation at the beginning of the new millennium geared by treating product stewards with extensive experience in system designing and fabrication of waste purification equipment intended for melted wastes.

Ecowaste will be the First Estate's second garbage collector. The first collector couldn't survive everyone. From there it ran, wrote go directly to the Tanza dump, around 28 kilometers away from the estate.

In their contract signed by Ecowaste's Mc Kenzie Bello and Associate's Nestor Tinam and Sonny Jimenez, the two companies agreed that Ecowaste would supply the a collector, but a garbage processor.

Ecowaste wouldn't use the Tanza dump without the state agreement early next year. It would instead recycle wastes in a 2,500-square meter area inside the estate.

With the help of a group of Chinese investors led by Mr. Alvin Tomlinson, it have will put in P30 million for the development of the site, effectively making Ecowaste one of the estate's locators.

For a start, Ecowaste can supervise 150 tons of construction and demolition waste. It will also build about five classrooms for scavengers in Tanza, among others.

Now, if only the other export processing zones will follow suit.

OFFICIALS of First Cavite and Ecowaste look over the site where the recycling of the garbage will be done.

MAP picks best annual report

MACHIMA CORP. WON THE first Annual Report Award for 2004 handed out annually by the Management Association Philippines.

First runner-up was Alaska Transport Systems Corp., while second runner-up was the Manila Water Co.

"MAP believes that the capital markets will develop quickly if information drives companies from thinly to investment parties. Minority shareholders, with little participation in company management, are dependent on financial information," said Jose Ma. Kapunan, director of the Institute of Corporate Directors, in charge of conducting the search.

The Virtual Presentation Award was given to Alaska Equity Investors and PLDT 26.07 also got the Best Corporate Governance Disclosure for Non-Financial Institutions Award while the Best in Corporate Governance Disclosure for Financial Institutions went to Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

The MAP gave a special award for a conglomerate whose three or more companies made it to the top 10 finalists and this was awarded to Ayala Group.

MAP, the leading management organization in the country, annually holds this search to award corporations, which practice good governance by adhering to the rules of transparency, accountability, and are compliant with international standards of financial reporting.

Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) president Francis Lim said that more listed companies will be interested to vie for these prestigious awards in the coming years.

The 10 finalists were Alaska Equity Investors, Alaska Transport Systems Corp., Ayala Land, Banco de Oro Universal Bank, China Banking Corp., Chinatrust (Phils.) Commercial Bank Corp., First Gen Corp., Globe Telecom, Keppel Philippines Marine, Keppel Philippines Properties, Machinema Corp., Manila Water Co., Petron, PLDT and Pilbank.

Program helps strengthen entrepreneurship

MORE THAN 400,000 OFWs (overseas graduate) from college every year, and among this lot, only 10 to 15 percent go jobs.

The solution to the problem will not create another union, judging from the little effect that policing done to address it.

So where do our new graduates go?

Overseas. Some are forced to do manual labor and most end up not using their college degree at all.

To put it simply, the effort, time and money now graduates have spent for their education go down to, well, almost nothing.

Jobs are getting harder to come by. Blaming this on the economy, the government, or the quality of education will produce nothing.

Mindoc charge

"There has to be a change of mindset among Filipinos. Instead of waiting for good opportunities, we should take the initiative and create those opportunities," says Jose Ricardo, director of the Entrepreneurial Management Program of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP).

"After all, we all choose to be a CEO or president someday. But how do we get there? By getting employed? That's a very long way to go. We should build our own business, let's feel the administration by the prosper because an entrepreneurship can be learned," he added.

Unique program

The University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP), which has seen the need to train the country's future entrepreneurs, has designed a unique program that spells success for its graduates and empowers them to bridge the country's entrepreneurial gap as well.

The University's Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurial Management (BSE) Program is the first of its kind in Asia. It is the only program that captures and nurtures every entrepreneurial talent as early as the adolescent years. For 17 years now it has been producing industry movers and shakers—leaders who, in one way or another, have helped the country's economy and created jobs for thousands of Filipinos.

The four-year program requires students to work during the three summers in between academic years.

These students are exposed to the unexpected during early on, making it easier for them to adjust to responsibilities and challenges that will face them after graduation.

Aside from their on-the-job training, students also attend face-to-face sessions in evening classes.

"The Entrepreneurial Management Program is a cure to monotony. We want students to realize that college should not be treated as an extension of high school. We promote and challenge our students simultaneously to develop in them the resilience, patience, diligence and motivation that every professional, not only entrepreneurs, should have. And having learned a lot from their experience, in the end, our students understand and become very grateful to me for subjecting them to a difficult course," Nestor said.

New ventures

The program is unique for its New Venture Adventure (NVA) class, wherein students are challenged to put up their own successful business even before they graduate from college.

Without a viable business at the end of the series, students will not be allowed to graduate. "The NEV Series puts students to the test—whether they have acquired the knowledge, skills and talents of an entrepreneur," Nestor explained.

The BSE Series continues students with various issues in the entrepreneurial process: creating and identifying opportunities, marshalling the resources to succeed, to exploiting opportunities, taking risks and action; reaping, sustaining and renewing growth and rewards and re-committing a mature business.

Given the difficulty of the course, students applying for the program undergo a rigorous admission process involving exams and interviews.

"Out of the 600 who would apply for the program, only 15 percent would be admitted. The reason is that we make sure that we select students gifted with the values of an entrepreneur: creative, risk-taking and opportunistic, or quick to spot opportunities even in adverse situations," Nestor said.

Success story

Among the program's grads, one is Jose Antonio Soliel. Soliel, the program's first cum laude alumnus, is the president of Soliven Water Technologies Inc. He bought this business from his father shortly after he graduated, and he has since consistently grown the company since then. Now, Soliven has 300 franchisees.

Only 10 years old and already a successful businessman, Soliel is unconventionally wealthy in the UAP Program to share his gift with young aspiring entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is a potent resource for individuals and helps propel the Philippine economy. After all, Filipinos are renowned by various levels to implement ideas we see, and to solve problems, such as using clothesdryers to deliver goods from a sari-sari store to neighboring houses in a flood-inundated barangay. DARE to inspire Filipinos to boost government challenges by turning up businesses out of it, it is true that taking risk is part of investing on a business, and we should not be afraid to take the risk and plunge.

"We learn best when we commit mistakes because you become wiser," Nestor said.

Building a jewelry enterprise to last

From page B1

Evaluation Board, is in charge of marketing and corporate communications.

Mark, who is nine years junior, Jayett Ellie Gold's Cheryl, helps with the workshops, is finding success in creating accessories and other special projects.

"He has many, many good ideas and whenever he needs something, he brings both those ideas and translates them into something helpful in the business," she says.

Jayett Chapel Bonnard, a CPA, handles all our money matters, while Jhanyn (Jayett-Bonnard), who's good with administration and financial matters, is in charge of affiliate Mikay Furnishings.

Must obedient

Of the siblings, Jayett-Salmon would naturally be on top of the business because she had spent most of her life learning the aspect of this business from their mother.

"When mom was alive, I followed everything she wanted me to do—hanging with her friends, take up classical singing, wear Maria Clara. I was the most obedient one. I lived with her even after I was married," she says.

She doesn't like handling money but is creative and meticulous, and is good at creating new lines.

The jewelry business, she says, requires a lot of personal touch and usually customers come back, transcending generations.

"We give jewelry advice, such as what to buy, the family heirlooms, what to sell, what to keep, how to redesign or resolve whether for insurance purposes," she says.

"We also have the mom-[illegible] touch," Jayett (pregnant). "The items selling in your jewelry box, you can bring them over and redesign them into something that suits your personality," she says.

The biggest lesson from their entrepreneurial stories is that **what was done to keep the family together in order to keep the business.**

"It's your family you can really depend on in times of need ... so we instill family values even among our employees," she says. "The family that works together shines together. Together is the secret of success."

Overhauled paradigm

The business paradigm had to be overhauled to penetrate the company in bigger markets, using sourcing industry. After all, their mother Mila dreamt that "each Filipino shall own a Mikay as matter how small."

"Then we realized that some people believe that Mikay is unaffordable, that we carry only the elite market," Dayett-Salmon says.

But in fact she says Mikaya has items worth as low as P1,000. The store has also come up with gift cards worth at least P1,000, giving recipients the freedom of choice.

"We also decided to come up with a new look for our stores. It's still Mikaya (of old) but with more modern approach, still with the antique, to attract the younger group ... We remodeled old establishment while building new ones," she says.

Mikaya also started branching out into the malls, realizing the opportunities from the human traffic. The stores are not too big, ranging from 30-40 square meters, but enough to make a strong presence. It seats malls like Alabang where there's no bigger space available yet, then to malls with kiosks, which has turned out to be a good approach.

The jewelry store chain, which all starts a lot of flashbacks and foreigners, has also established an online presence www.mikaya.com.ph.

The jewelry business is more competitive now. There are so many foreign brands; all the fashion houses are going into jewelry. People have more choices, but we're comfortable with who we are and the work that we do and the value-for-money items that we prepare in our stores," Dayett-Salmon says.

THE SAINT sisters

Siblings' collection

Reflecting their personal touch in the business, each of the five siblings has a jewelry line collection patterned after their individual personality. Jaqueline started the heirloom series collection of Mikaya through her logo. It's line of investments that can be worn and passed on from generation to generation. Michelle Marie, named after Jayett-Salmon, is a refined line of big and flashy pieces that can be worn day to or day out. Mark of Mikaya is a showcase of distinctive trade contemporary jewelry. Bernadette Tood Collection is a line of colorful jewelry inspired by Christine's many sojourns. "Pointe de adoption" Rosas Gold, a complete showcase of rare and truly treasures.

"As a family, we have already built our name and all we had to do was capitalize it and remodel it because it is a legacy that our parents brought us. And it's a business we believe we can pass on to our children," she says.

Seaweed processing faces bright prospects

By Irene R. Sies Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

Unusual growth posted with closure of plant in Denmark

CEBU CITY—THE COUNTRY'S seaweed processing industry faces bright market prospects with the closure of a plant in Denmark.

Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines (Siaap) president Florencio U. Dakay called "tsunami thing" in the past, says the industry has experienced unusual growth this year as the export value increased beyond 10 percent.

But Dakay expresses concern over the continued strengthening of the peso as it could hamper the growth of the processed seaweed or carrageenan industry, as well as the other export sectors.

Dakay says the industry expert sales has been growing at an average 10 percent over the past few years.

The Shamberg group, for example, registered 25 percent growth in export sales this year, according to Dakay, who is president and chief executive officer of the Shamberg Marketing Corp.

Dakay says that the other seaweed processors also posted more than the usual growth this year due to the closure of the FMC Corp. plant in Denmark, which had a 5,000-ton capacity.

He says the seaweed processors in the Philippines filled the void left by the closed Denmark facility.

In the past, Dakay says, the Australian companies usually got the top spot.

This year, however, the Shamberg Marketing Corp.-under member cites, which were named processors PMG Plantation Colloid Philippines Inc. and GP Xelco Philippines Inc. were ranked third and fifth, respectively.

Three Filipino companies—Pacific Traders Manufacturing Corp., Industrial Farmers Co. Inc. and Cana Cebuana Inc.—ranked sixth, eighth and tenth, respectively.

On the other hand, Dakay warns the export sector would lose its competitiveness in the world market if the peso-strengthens.

A FARMER carries a bunch of newly harvested seaweed.

This would not bode well for the economy, he says, since the export sector provides employment both direct and indirect.

He cites as an example the seaweed processors, which has helped create livelihood opportunities in southern Philippines and other areas in Luzon and the Visayas.

"We have created 30 businesses/seaweed farmers in South-ern Philippines," Dakay points out.

In earlier interviews, he also maintained that the seaweed industry has helped address the problems in the Muslim areas since the bulk of seaweed supply comes from there areas.

Aside from the processed seaweed or carrageenan industry, the other export sectors are also affected by the strengthening of the peso.

If the peso remains volatile and the government refuses to intervene, he says, the export sector would have to look into ways on how they could cut down costs to sustain growth.

If the situation worsens, Dakay says would have to stop buying local seaweed and source its raw material requirement from to-

morrow, which is cheaper and of better quality, Dakay says.

The local seaweed sells at $800 per ton at 42 percent moisture content while the Indonesia seaweed costs only $600 per ton at 35 percent moisture.

Dakay says the Indonesia seaweed is cheaper and has better quality but Shamberg continues to buy locally to help the local farmers.

At present, Shamberg source 50 percent of its raw material requirement from the Philippines and the rest from Indonesia.

In the past, Shamberg sourced almost 100 percent of its requirement from local seaweed farmers but the company had to buy from abroad to remain competitive.

On top of the strong peso, Dakay says, the country's seaweed processors have to contend with the pesky competition from other Asian countries.

"There are less many players in the semi-refined carrageenan market," he says.

There are 300 seaweed processors in China, 22 in Indonesia and 10 more in the Philippines, Dakay adds.

Get job alerts via your mobile phone

LOOKING FOR A JOB AND LANDING one is now made easier with SimplyWorks, a mobile-based job placement system exclusive to subscribers of Smart Communications, Inc. (Smart).

One must registration in the mobile service sources the latest advertisement of recruiting best SMS up to three times a week alerting him of available jobs in the industry of his choice.

Smart is continuously looking for services that will enhance processes and make things easier for our subscribers. In this case, the subscriber doesn't have to scan the classifieds or surf the Internet to know what's on the job market, through SimplyWorks, he receives job alerts on his phone, wherever and whenever he is three times a week for free," said Lawrence Pereira, Smart Value-Added Services head.

Participating companies and their job/skills partners are Shamberg Inc.; Bond Pacific Life Insurance; The Threatpro (Phils.) Corporation; Pioneer Micro Phils.; Equitas Investment Management; NGL Consulting Services Limited; ABS-CBN Interactive; Level Up; Ramon Pyatt-Asia Inc. and Personal Service Center; Sura Lee Phils.; Philippine Savings Bank, Jardin Technical Services Inc. and MDTV International Booking Systems.

To avail of the service, the subscriber must first register by sending the following information to 2997: PAF (NAME>/AGE)/<gender: M or F>/ <City of residence> (also: FIL/VOC/CCLL/INGRID) (SIGNOUT).

For example, a subscriber by the name of Ted Cruz wants to subscribe to PeopleWorks on his search on 2007 his information: PAF Ted Cruz/28 Mandaluyong City/LL Jo Mary University. Each SMS costs P2.50.

Once successfully registered, Mr. Cruz will be prompted to choose in which industry he wants to work: PBI (Business); HR (human resources); ADMIN (administrative); SALES; MOTO (marketing); ARTS; MEDIA; SERVICES; HOTEL; FOOD; TRAVEL; EDU (education); CS (customer service); IT (information technology); BPOO (engineering); BPO (source processing); SCI (science); and HEALTH. If Mr. Cruz wants to look for a job in the IT industry, all he has to do is type PAF IT OH to 2997. This SMS is free of charge.

The freelance Mr. Cruz will then be notified via SMS that he will soon receive five attractive job openings in the IT industry up to three months a week.

Should Mr. Cruz decide that he also wants to be alerted on job openings in

the customer service industry, he can text PSVCS OK to 2997. (To which he will receive be charged P3.50 per SMS).

Three times each week, Mr. Cruz will start receiving free job alerts, which are lists of codes with corresponding job descriptions. If he wants to apply for one of the jobs, he simply sends PAF (job code) to 2997.

For example, if Mr. Cruz wants to apply for job code 000455, which represents a systems analyst, he simply texts PAF 000455 to 2997. Each SMS costs P2.50. He will then receive an SMS confirmation of his application as well as an advice that all applications will be processed within two weeks.

Only when he qualifies for the job will Mr. Cruz receive an SMS asking him to send his resume to jobs@peopleworks.com.

Even if he doesn't qualify for the post, Mr. Cruz will still receive an SMS advising him that the position has been filled.

The Smart-mobile-based job search and placement program was developed by content provider Wireless Services Asia (WSA) in partnership with Sun Interactive and Virtual Heavell.

Smart is the leading wireless services provider in the country, serving a total of 22.9 million subscribers as of end-September 2006.

Tarlac exporter sells . . .

from page B4

This means that Mr. Hizmido operations can guarantee Costa Classics could sell in the market.

However, when Magsalay and her husband separated in 2000, the two left to run the business, which now employs more than 25 workers.

She supervises the workers every step of the way—from drilling and slicing of the stones to putting together the different components and packaging them in gift boxes.

She also continues to attend local and international exhibits and personally oversees the shipment of her products.

"Hanging ako (I work hard). I give my time and devotion," she says.

But an entrepreneur must be "efficient and resourceful" at the same time, she adds.

Advocates said shrewd, this food and nutrition graduate of the University of Santo Tomas has every reason to be optimistic about expanding her foreign market.

Recently she exhibited her stone products in a trade show in Hong Kong. The next stop is Dubai.

"I will only stop doing trade shows when I already have two more foreign markets the size of the one I have in France," she says.

Her only regret is that the Philippine market has been left behind.

"Every almost-this, para dyan ko naman isi-saak ang local market (It's not as if I'm ignoring the local market for my products)," Magsalay said. "I can sell locally. In fact, I have a buyer in Manila."

In fact the low-cash Gloria-stone products are of advanced shrewd, she tells about a buyer who packed "Oh, my God! Imagine what you can make out of these."

GRACE Mirasol exhibited in a trade product in Hong Kong.

Buy a ham, get chance to win a house

WHAT IS YOUR MOST SUBSERT Christmas wish?

For many, it will be their own home. For some, it may be a trip abroad. Still, a positive number will say something as simple as a special Noche Buena dinner with the family.

Pureblook-Hormel Company, makers of Pureblook Fiesta Ham, is announcing to make the Holidays more special for many Filipinos this year, via a promo that will give them the chance to realize their Christmas wishes.

Dubbed Pureblook Tiesta Ham Noche Pa-Buena, the promo will give away a brand new house and lot in Marcelita, one of the most notable residential developments in the thriving industrial city of General Trias.

Lucky as grand prize, also at stake are all-expenses-paid trips to Hong Kong for three families and five Noche Buena packages for 50 families every week.

According to Isabel Hizola, Pureblook ham brand manager, consumers can join by buying any Pureblook ham, including Pureblook Tiesta Ham, Pureblook Cheese Ham, Pureblook Chicken Ham, Pureblook Pear Shaped Ham, Pureblook Jamon de Bola and Pureblook Brick Ham.

Customers only need to send, via text or SMS, the special number code found in the hams' packaging, to 2306.

For example: Text <PFHAM> <space> <code> <date of purchase (MM/DD/YY)> to 2306.

Then the promo to take PBC's way of celebrating the 50th anniversary of its flagship Pureblook brand, the promo has a corporate social responsibility (CSR) component that aims to give everyday consumers the chance to make a difference in the lives of many.

Customers who send the most text entries but are not winners in the weekly and grand draws will get the chance to throw a Christmas party, courtesy of Pureblook Hizola, for a charitable institution of their choice.

"We see this promo as an extension of our corporate social responsibility initiatives. We believe that through a promo like this, we will be able to help many more consumers socially aware and instill in them the spirit of volunteerism," Pineda said.

Sunday BIZ

Beaming Ilocos to the world via its cuisine

Balikbayan aims to glamorize and market Ilocos Sur and Filipino cuisine

By Cristina Arcadio
Inquirer Northern Luzon

VIGAN CITY—A DEcare to lift the Filipinos' image abroad has brought balikbayan Bonchelle Agango Cuet back to her hometown Vigan and explored what could be the best arrangement to promote her Ilocano ancestry.

And since Filipinos love to eat, Cuet found a solution in frozen Ilocos to the world through a two-day culinary feast Bangon Taysol (Let's Get Up, Ilocos!) on Dec. 8 and 9.

A food only a mouth for Cuet to organize the event, which included gathering more than 30 producers of popular Ilocos fare (other than bagnet [pork chunks], longganisa [native pork sausage], poqui-poqui [cooked eggplant] and empanada [made of pastel] papaya or mongo) and wrapped in cellophane and dubbed and delivered by Subway Longos-based pharmacist (30), lifestyle (nine other), trading (two) cake maker (a business school) and religious (minister) professions.

The idea to promote Ilocos cuisine stemmed from Cuet's observation that Filipino food was not making waves abroad as its other Asian counterparts.

An avid traveler, Cuet said the Filipino cuisine is a disenchanted entity compared to Vietnamese, Thai, Malaysian, Indonesian and Japanese food.

"There are no immediate Filipino restaurants that I know were and I jump for joy when I do find one, though rare and usually located off the beaten road," she said.

"My interest lies in exposing (Ilocos) for its rich natural beauty, I thought that since Filipinos love to eat, the Ilocos Sur cuisine is a unique and interesting product that needs to be marketed appropriately," Cuet said.

"Nobody has really told a total ... there's basic food festival and food fair, but there has been no festival which featured collectively all the specialties and delicacies of Ilocos Sur," she added.

She plans to market the culinary event abroad particularly to Ilocano communities in Hawaii.

"The main agenda is to introduce, glamorize and market not only Ilocos Sur cuisine but the Filipino cuisine as a whole, innovatively," she said.

Cuet found home in the Caribbean island of the Turks and Caicos and the United States since she left Vigan in 1974. She returned to the Philippines in 2000 taking over her family's real estate business and expanding it to include production and food industry.

"I don't want to be bothered at (a balikbayan) index to just have for anything else) I'm about helping and running to do what is good for (a Filipino). It made sense that I could use the uniqueness of Ilocos cuisine," she said.

"If I can do that as a balikbayan and bring it to my friends and families and tell them to come to the country which is a beautiful country with beautiful food. But I need support."

The culinary festival gathered the country's popular chefs led by Felicia Kitamoto-Ines, resident chef of Cibbi T's morning show Bisang Bisli and Regine's John Carlo Lucero, Mikhil Aston and Wilson Encinas.

The four reinvented Ilocos' popular products like bagnet and longganisa to wrap cut with cocktails-welcoming specialties like bagnet-pokpok pizza (pokpok is a small fish native which is usually canned to bagoong paste) and longganisa tacos.

Some for Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, famous in cultural dos' culture Preservation before his concert The birthday budget 200, made of longganisa, okay and empanada wrapper although his favorite dish is supposedly the "poqui-poqui," toasted eggplant mixed with tomato, onions and hard-boiled eggs.

Singson said the food festival was another venue to reintroduce Ilocos' popular food delicacies to the tourist city of Vigan.

Cuet said the culinary festival will set as a culinary springboard to boost the image of the Pinoy cuisine and to universally serve a respectable table in the culinary market.

"I want to promote Filipino cuisine and I am taking off with what we have in the Ilocos," she said.

PARTICIPANTS take a time out to pose for photographs at the Mangan sanad Food Fest.

GISELLE Magnaba with some of her products.

Elementary grad tops in duck-raising, balut-making

By Nina Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CD, ORIZ, LAGUNA—FOR Perdan "Ted" Garcia, 66, an elementary graduate, "tiging ni tiya ge" (hard work and perseverance) are the main secrets of his success in 40 years of duck-raising and balut-making.

Garcia owns a poultry business with 4,000 heads of duck, a shop producing at least 20,000 "balut" a week, and other products like salted eggs and "penoy."

Balut is preserved duck's egg with one to three-week-old duck while penoy is preserved duck's egg without duck but only the egg white and yolk.

Garcia delivers his products to provinces like Quezon and Batangas.

In Laguna, buyers from Sta. Rosa City, Binan-tino and Lilia would pay a visit to arrange for bulk orders of his products.

From his business, Garcia acquired a slippery and expanded his rice field.

Also, he was able to send his six children to college.

100 ducklings

Garcia said he sells. Initially bought 100 ducklings to raise of to Chili merchant in 1966.

He says he was surprised to see how his flocks multiplied from 100 to 200, and then to three-digit.

Garcia's parents and grandparents were also duck-raisers and balut-makers since 1940s.

He says he somehow acquired the skill from them.

After World War II, when he was five years old, his grandparents put up a business producing balut to be sold in the "Crab public market.

"During those times, I would always watch them how they reared ducks and made balut," he recalls.

In 1951, Garcia decided to venture on his own.

Many people talking for balut around drop by his house.

People in his community know him as "Si Biang Pend," young magkakalut (the balut maker).

PRIDE Garcia delivers balut to Quezon and Batangas.

"Noong mga time, I would always watch them how they reared ducks and made balut," he recalls.

In 1951, Garcia decided to venture on his own.

Many people talking for balut around drop by his house.

People in his community know him as "Si Biang Pend," young magkakalut (the balut maker).

Normally, he says, a buyer would order at least 100 eyeballs each balut.

Timeless business

There was even a period that the eggs in his poultry were not enough to be needed to buy eggs outside the town.

Duty in his retiring age, Garcia never falters in monitoring the business.

He says he knows whether a balut was in good or bad quality.

"I always check the kind of work of my hired workers. Often, we conduct seminars including the workers," he says in Filipino.

Tarlac exporter sells stones

By Russell Asadio
Inquirer Central Luzon

CONCEPCION, TARLAC—BUsinessman Gaudie Magsalay-Ocampo has left post-graduate-level experience company room by store. Literally.

It was a roughly-size piece of rock, which Magsalay and her former Swedish husband used in 1998 in a remote province, her company, Orion Corp., now boasts of more than a dozen products—candleholders, vases, tall diffusers, coffee trays, key and book holders, among others—that are made entirely of natural stones.

Magsalay, 47, says her firm is the only one in the country that manufactures and exports these kinds of items.

Her products, as described in the company's website, "are decorative items where the natural shape, texture and color is given by the forces of nature are preserved in modern possible."

"Each stone is chosen for its beauty and uniqueness in shape, structure and color. No two stones are exactly similar," the website adds.

She ships to France at least 5,000 pieces of her stone products every two months. Items are priced between $5 ($5.60) and $15 ($987) and each shipment is worth about $20,000 ($986,400).

She also has buyers in London and Singapore and plans to enter a market in the United States.

"We started small," Magsalay says.

She and her Swedish husband initially joined small shows. Then they went to sell locally by setting up shops in Pasman's and Glorietta and by having their items displayed in a number of handicraft stores.

A significant event during the early years of Orion, declared to be the world's "colonial contract," was the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 because it gave birth to a new product: Pinatubo stones.

TARLAC ES

EACH stone is chosen for its beauty, shape, color.

How balut is made

PROBLAN GARCIA, WHO HAS been raising ducks for 40 years, explains to the Inquirer how balut is made.

First, at least 10,000 eggs are put inside metered baskets in holes. Each basket is covered with cloth.

The holes are collectively called "kuwa." A kuwa has 70 holes and each hole can accommodate 1,000 eggs.

After three days, another set of 10,000 eggs are brought inside the kuwa. The eggs should be left there for two days.

Garcia says it is important to balance the heat in the kuwa. Every morning and afternoon, the position of the eggs should be interchanged.

Afterwards, the farmed balut should be screened through salt light to check for the quality.

Charging technology

To update his knowledge in agriculture and agribusiness, Garcia always attends seminars conducted by academic institutions and nongovernment organizations, one month.

One of those seminars, which was held in UP Los Baños, tackled alternative means of agricultural production, he says.

Currently, Garcia is the chairperson of the Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries Council in Laguna.

He says poultry farmers had changed through time.

"After the war, the people here were raising ducks and chickens in their respective backyard. The business is not really big," he says.

Garcia says it was in the 1980s that the new poultry system emerged. "All the ducks and chickens are now located in a big place and we compete in this business, one needs a big amount of capital."

Changing technology would also mean higher expenditures, he adds.

"Before, we used to feed ducks with snails found in the lake. But now, there are specific feeds for ducks that cost P540 per 50 kilos," he says.

Even though he seemed to have the old method in feeding the ducks, he says they were already prohibited from catching snails in Laguna Lake.

"So, we really have no options," he says.

Garcia is passing on the tradition of the business to his six children.

One of his children has even helped his own poultry business in Victoria, Laguna while the others are helping him in the management and marketing of their balut production here.

He says he did not want to leave the business that changed their lives.

"The craft of balut-making seemed to be in our bloodlines," Garcia added.

The Garcia family has hired 10 workers in its business. Willie Gutierrez Collejo, Inquirer Southern Luzon

EGGS wrapped in a cloth are placed in air-ventilated baskets with holes.

THE EGGS should be covered every morning and afternoon.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Missing that good ol' Christmas feeling

HOW MANY CHILDREN these days receive their Christmas gifts under the Christmas tree? How many open their gifts by unwrapping reels of ribbons and unfolding layers of wrappers to find the surprising heart of the box? And how many believe that these goodies come from Santa Claus?

These are just a few of our favorite things, scenes and sentiments on Christmas Day that today's generation of children may no longer experience.

Because nowadays Christmas gifts are bought months or even anywhere and anytime. Gifts are not wrapped the way they used to be, no longer building suspense in the hearts of the child. Gone is the element of surprise.

And Santa Claus is no longer present in the child's mind, whether in reality or in imagination, for only tots in an old Christmas song.

We surveyed a few people, stopping to say hello their jobs to ask, to find out the things that they missed most about the holidays of their youth and following are their untold anecdotes.

SMART GOLD

CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH STYLE.

Upgrade your image when you get the new Nokia 6288 3G mobile phones for free.

Also available:

SMART Gold Miles Raffle Promo

NOKIA
Connecting People

Missing that good ol' Christmas feeling

Is Christmas not what it used to be? Has it really lost its old luster? What do you miss most about Christmas?

My mom, 11 siblings, 15 nephews, six nieces and the few in-laws have been gracing with all my favorite food. All my loved ones are Californian residents now. —**Mike de la Rosa**, fashion designer

The holidays at the seasons gone. Family bonding has drastically. There's too much commercialism everywhere. The Mass de Gallo is no more. And even the smallest does not give an ultimatum of Christmas. —**Fr. Dennis Salcedo-Ada**, SVgrace-love parish priest

My dad, friends and all my nieces and abroad. —**Patrick Rosas**, makeup artist

I miss the spirit of innocence in a child's Christmas. The excitement of receiving gifts (especially wrapping) as I'm trying to pry open, shaking each one and guessing what each one could be. Sleepless counting the days before I could open them on Christmas day. Today it's easy to give. —**Alec Bes**, restaurateur

The innocence of Christmas. Like when receiving gifts which I believed were from Lee, Tess, Papa, Mayor. —**Annette Ho**, Kasimir curator and board member

The company of the friends I have since the old days. —**Jesse Robredo**, cabinet member

The excitement surrounding with imported foodstuff and sweets. I miss the elaborate wrappings of gifts. Now there is less excitement since Christmas lights and the season, like Christmas shopping. —**Marites Vitug**, MCFI author

Definitely cool weather with little rain. Typhoons after breaking with the heat upon December and Christmas. —**Gemma Lee Cruz**, mall promoter

Bring a bit. Back in time: I would go back home to Negros for Christmas gifts. We had the "panuluhan" where among my nephews and would get paid to my godparents' place searching something. It turned out that they would only give me 2% centavos, and I would take them for a year. But come said Christmas I would gotta that place again with a second hope. —**Zenaro Lucban**, fashion designer

With the advent of e-mail and e-cards, I miss Christmas cards arriving weeks before Christmas Day. It usually be so much fun seeing how you open and flash out which card looked really good and who wrote the most heartwarming greeting or the weakest! Receiving Christmas cards is the last remaining reminder of what Christmas is. —**Bo Kim**, interior designer

Actually I just had a family vacation at my grandmother's place (father's sister), Consuelo Tuason. It was great. No long lines/great lookup with her famous Spanish clothing. Her groceries need just a mushroom, capers, olives, ham, bologna and what have you. The ham was cooked with sugar, crushed pineapple and beer. I still cook those things but hers was really different and better. —**Ed Quiambao**, chief executive officer

Christmas back when life was simpler, and the world was more us. The morning Christmas displays across at Manila's CBD and up at Ayala's were. Truly delightful to watch. We'd get all hundred style sensations and fabulous family car and drive around to see all the Christmas lights. Also, carolers seem to be a thing lined, or maybe caroling just doesn't go with condo living. —**Myra Linao**, magazine editor

My family used to live in a depressed area in Mandaluyong, and the neighborhood exercised Christmas (Nov) during family. We provide, walk arise and an budget kind. I miss the crowd, noise and chaos. —**Ricardo Pascia**, artist

I miss being a child. —**Joey Salcedo**, fashion designer

My parents' big Christmas parties and what I got to taste my way over (mostly gift from them). —**Lee Lee Chua**, fashion designer

The smell and taste of rice cakes that I'm a Christmas that. —**Carol Ty**, food consultant

The days when it was actually cold! I remember thinking Sabrina Chiller wearers past when the mist, nippy air would cut the nose for the holidays. Now, you can really feel the effects of global warming. —**Pristine Alon**, magazine editor

My mom during Christmas. We, her children, would feel the love with and love as she personally prepared our gifts and food for the whole day, and opened doors for relatives, friends and employees. Everyone would come with gifts. —**Bobby Benedicto**, fashion designer

The simple pure of being together with my family, the laughter and the company of my elders and their families, and the many gifts that we would open on Christmas Eve. —**Jessie Ringor**, PR practitioner

When I was living in the US, my parties and I used to prepare Christmas dinner for a group of homeless people in our area with Aditi, who interacts. We would have spent the day alone, I miss the joy we bringing it. —**Jo Cuesta**, fashion designer

As a child, ... getting quite tall to open my gifts under the tree on Christmas eve. Sometimes I would receive gifts from relatives and even fellow neighborhood children. It was extraordinary because that I knew about. —**Monique Lhuillier**, fashion designer

Caroling. Way back in high school, caroling was something many more would look forward to. It was more than just singing Christmas songs. It was a way of getting to know our classmates better. After greeting them with songs, our classmates' homes would open their homes to us and would let us feast on normally they lovingly prepared. We got to see their shared, and classmates we hanged, children's photos excitedly shown and memories to be. —**Jessica Antonio Gimena**, lawyer

The time that I celebrated in San Francisco. It was Christmas more magical. But now that I have a son, it will soon be my turn to play old Santa. —**Emma Grace Aimee**, blog designer/ avid wine lover

Christmas has just gotten so commercial that I miss the simple pleasures we used to do. My cousins and I would go to Monterey Bay and get in a freezing, ride on our horses, followed by a Pinoy breakfast of beef sticks of with cheese, tamale or cheese with coffee. —**Eileen Ramos**, Gran Hotel designer

Being part of the Christmas I've preparations at home. Before the restaurant business, I have to attend to the fabulous orders of our guests so I miss the festive hours since it's the busiest time of the year. It feels great past the same because that makes us part of their Christmas celebrations. But, I really miss Christmas carolers and getting surprised by the neighbors and exchange card presents from fellow Chicos. —**Miguel Alix**, restaurateur

My loved ones who have passed on and the time when Christmas wasn't so commercial. When there was no mall and we'd just drive around visiting relatives was a breeze because traffic wasn't as bad. —**Mia Magsaysay Gotianun**, news anchor

The smell, look and feeling of Christmas home and the traditional lumpia in Grand Mandaluyong, you really enjoy what both cultures have. —**Jorge Acuna**, artist

My favorite time: Christmas Eve, we also shall to Pinoy mass. 12, in Manila CBD. It was very rushed and we were not prepared. But ultimate, was to learn lots of good tips and it was nice to be after the passing. Remember a great Christmas evening from years! to us with them. —**Mako Lozano**, bag designer and entrepreneur

Being able to go up to the areas in Davao valley and skiing, camping in the snow with the whole family. I miss watching football games and barbequing or family gathering just gain in, hunting, or we have to redouble our talks and during all by the fireplace. —**Michael Wong**, radio personality

"But Christmases when my cousins and I were young and we still had our lives divided by our parents, as everyone would happily spend the holidays together. I have days we all been different from in various parts of the world so it's harder to gather everyone and be a complete family. —**Cat Juan**, beauty editor

1. The time to relax and be the best. The key here doesn't pay the bills or hard to spend. **2.** Most goods it. Consumerism brings it to materials. Have been taken by real people — I like the human factor to be an element, going to the trip for permanent **3.** More impactful, more real. Hands **5.** Most important, I miss the family in Christmas! —**Nancy Reyes-Lumbao**, client and food magazine editor

Spectacular theme-park Christmas

ENJOY A BRIGHT very Christmas at Enchanted Kingdom and the Trumpets Theater Group delights you with a special all-new animated play on Dec. 22, 23 and 29.

Join Maldimart, the Paste, Santa & Mr. Claus, Astro-kid & his cat Bitit journey to find the best Christmas gift ever.

Enchanted Kingdom's Boiler Theater is made into a thrilling landscape of space battles between futuristic and dazzling lasers, a lush 3-D thrill- multimovie marvel.

Full of powerful sights and jaw-light effects, the 12-minute dazzler lights up the skies on Dec. 23, 28, Christmas Day, 30, 31(12 am) and Jan. 1, 2007. See you there!

In "Los Hitmen's Magic Show" on Dec. 25-27, master illusionist and magician Los Hitmen takes the stage with multi-talents, making Enchanted Kingdom a truly magical wonderland for everyone.

"The Enchanted Storybook" opens up a world of magical storytelling in Enchanted Kingdom all Saturdays and Sundays of December at Midway Boardwalk.

Fantasy celebrities will grace the occasion including Star Circus on Dec. 23, Regine Tolentino on Dec. 26, Chesca Ho Pancho on Dec. 27, Shalyn Reyes on Dec. 28, and Jessica Gonzalez Dec. 29 and 30.

Winners of the 6th Annual Alipatpat Storytelling Competition will also be featured in guest storytellers on Dec. 24 and 30.

Musical shows by Enchanted Kingdom's resident bands entertainers, top dreadlocks and a string quartet are also ongoing, including the musical "My First Christmas."

Lucky enjoy dining Scrooge Style or eat with victory of amusement like Galactic Toons, Lincoln Dino, Astroburn Grill, Bibingkahan, and Ice Age Ice Cream.

Holiday revelry at hotel

THERE IS MUCH TO see, hear and taste at one of Manila's leading deluxe hotels throughout the holiday season.

Aside from the spectacular Christmas tree at the lobby of Pan Pacific Hotels—a sight to behold with its dazzling lights and colors—music and rhythm also await everyone here.

The hotel's lobby comes alive with the harmonious voices of the Butler Chorale singing Christmas carols and the clarinetist steps on the floor for dances daily, from 5-6 p.m., with performances up to Christmas Day.

On Christmas Eve, Pan Pacific hosts a enchantedic celebration amid the greens and blooms of the Garden Garden, capped by the traditional Media Noche here at the Pacific Lounge.

But why wait for Christmas Eve? Savor holiday flavors every day at Pan Pacific with chocolates, pastries, fruit cakes, spruced-up rum and fruits, and these scrumptious Filipino favorites available at hotel outlets.

As general manager Richard Mandin says: "This December, it's all about time, quality and service, at Pan Pacific Hotel."

Call 1303700.

Christmas Brings Good Tidings to People with Diabetes

Christmas means everyone's spirit to simultaneous gestures of giving, sharing and bonding. There is a special air about it no other seasons have. Such is the spirit that Christmas brings to the world, together with the merriment of feasting to overflowing foods, drinks and gifts. The least as we know it, can give and receive as much love the season can offer, but food and drinks that come with it are best taken in moderation especially among people suffering from diabetes.

Diabetes mellitus is a disorder of metabolism in which there is lack of insulin production and/or an inadequate response to insulin, a hormone responsible for converting sugar, starches and other foods into energy. It transports glucose from the blood into the cells, or the sugar that the body needs as its primary fuel. People with diabetes are specially prone to fatalities of cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke if not maintained daily on medications. One of the reasons behind this is that their lack of glucose causes high levels of circulating cholesterol and lipids that lead to the development of atherosclerosis or blocked arteries that decreases blood flow. They need twice as much caring through added protection that can be combined with their anti-diabetic drug. **Aspilets,** a pill valued as **the right lifetime partner,** is Christmas' good tidings to people with diabetes. It has worldwide documented preventive benefits against cardiovascular diseases by effectively maintaining normal blood flow to the body through prevention of plaque formations and maintenance of normal blood flow. Aspilets contains antithrombotic properties. Its action is better articulated in the vernacular as "**pampalabnaw ng dugo**". Without the smooth and adequate amount of blood flowing to the entire human body, any organ that is originally healthy will soon fail to function properly because the whole system relies on it for food and nourishment.

Even people with diabetes can have a fruitful life with a healthy heart. Maintaining clean living and nutritious plus a daily dose of Aspilets ensures them of continuous blood flow to fuel their heart. From a healthy heart stems a quality **LIFE**.... *the most precious gift of all.*

DIGITAL IXUS
Where style meets substance

Canon
Delighting You Always

Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.
3F Manila Plaza, 2103 Don Chino Roces Avenue ext. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
Tel. 884-9000 • Fax 810-8781 • info@canon.com.ph • www.canon.com.ph

POWERED BY DIGIC

Milestones

Send us here announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and group picture along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the Inquirer, 5/F Rm 2503 Philippine Global Post Office 1202 Mabini City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and are sent to the senders.

ENCARNACION GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Emilio and Nilda Encarnacion will renew their vows Dec. 27 at 10 Chapel Parish of the Holy Sacrifice. Reception will follow at the University of the Philippines Bahay ng Alumni.

The bride will wear to Eddie Sud dress creations.

RODAS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Ramon and Blasiana Rodas celebrated recently their silver wedding anniversary at Our Lady of Assumption in the Hills. Pasig, Manuela, Manila (21); brother-in-law. With the couple are their children Sharon, Lola, Vilma and BC. The reception was held at Rodrigo Mansion's residence.

CRUZ-TAN

Daniel Allen Cruz, son of Danilo and Mary Cruz, will wed Candy Tan, daughter of Rodolfo Tan and Esther Tan, Jan. 2 at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City. Reception will follow at the Hotel Plaridel, Batangas City. The bride will wear a set ensemble by Eric Wanda.

VILLAVERDE 50th ANNIVERSARY

Rigoberto Manuel and Consuelo Villaverde celebrated recently their golden wedding anniversary at Pilar Church, QC. The mass was officiated by Bishop Teodoro Buscant, Fr. Crispin Gordoncillo, SVD, and Fr. Rodrigo Egbin.

BORENA GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Rollie and Manang Borena celebrated recently their golden anniversary at the Abbey of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Sto. Rosa Church).

SHARRY-DELMUNDO

John Joseph Sharry Jr., son of John Sharry Sr. and Maria Ramos, will wed Rejina M. del Mundo, daughter of Mario Delmundo and Evelyn Mariano, Oct. 17, at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (Manila Cathedral), Intramuros, Manila. Reception will be at The Grand Pilipinas Hotel, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, Manila.

GRACIA-ADA

Rian Eric S. de Gracia, son of Oliverio and Sandrea de Gracia, will wed Gracelia D. Ada, daughter of Imelda and Rolando Ada, Dec. 27, at the Ina Agustin Church, Bataan. Reception will follow at Fisher Mansion, Bataan.

UY-PATAWARI

Jessie Uy Jr. and Ms. Pauline Uy, son of Rolf Uy, gabriel Patawari, daughter of Rogelio Patawari, will exchange vows Dec. 29, at Rizal-de-San Antonio. Reception will be held at Hotel Rosa, Ching Patawari designed the bridal gown.

Visa's Great Rebate pays you back all your 2006 Visa purchases.

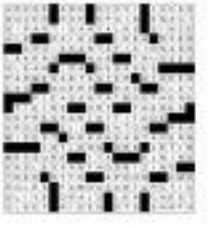
Open to all Philippine-issued Visa Debit, Prepaid, Credit and Visa Electron cardholders.
A minimum P500 single-receipt Visa purchase allows cardholders to register.
Registration may be done through SMS. Text the following details to 2366 for Globe and 325 for Smart:

a. Full name (as it appears on the card)
b. First 6 digits of the account number
c. Last 4 digits of the account number
d. Amount of transaction
e. Date of transaction
f. Time of transaction (24-hour format)
Ex. VGA Meena Su 400606, 1234, 5000.21, 9/26, 1808

Visa transactions may also be registered through the Promo website (www.ratimasia.com/visa).
Draws will be conducted bi-weekly starting November 27, 2006 (total of 6 winners).
Promo period: November 12, 2006 – January 31, 2007

VISA
All it takes.

ANSWERS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



Sunday LIFESTYLE

ORCHARD Road Christmas tree on display

IT'S a big life at the Singapore Garden Festival

BRONZE winner Christmas in a Philippine village by Monica Bolera

Unique Yuletide party in Singapore

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

It may be a tiny country but it's big on attractions of all kinds, especially this Christmas

MUSIC CAULTHEMED Christmas tree at Clarke Quay

CELEBRATE a TROPICAL STYLE Christmas at Uniquely Singapore. It may be a tiny country but it's big on various attractions of all kinds. We found the 1901 Jumpolitic Ballroom Kids; you get a breathtaking, 360-degree panoramic view of Singapore's jubilantly lit cityscape. It makes everyone's spirit literally soar sky-high.

This year's festivities included the very first Singapore Garden Festival at Suntec City Convention Centre. This botanical festival is the first in the world to bring together top international landscape and garden designers and gigantic displays of floral creations and beautifully adorned Christmas trees. After displaying only a showcase of Southeast Asia's rich biodiversity of tropical orchids.

Festival highlights featured the Best of Show Designer Gardens comprising landscape and luxury gardens that included an entry from the Philippines by multi-awarded designer Yenshu Dalena. Her design captured the Christmas celebrations in the Philippines, focused mainly on the Nativity.

Nenen's garden was decked out with a native sibling atop a bed of watermelon with life-size wood-

SINGAPORE 31

CHRISTMAS tree made of orchids at the Singapore Garden Festival

MULTICOLORED Christmas trees at Robinsons Department Store

MYGLOBE
YOUR FAVORITE SONG
NOW PLAYING. FOR FREE! INFO, TEXT 3GWOW10 TO 2222.
ang lakas mo sa Globe

PICTURESQUE view from the Botanical, The Standard

COGEL MAKES VCO INTAKE EASY AND CONVENIENT!

Virgin coconut oil (VCO) is the source of countless benefits and COGEL VCO is the first-ever VCO in a softgel! Here are three big reasons to take this revolutionary health supplement.

First, COGEL makes VCO intake absolutely convenient and easy. No more worries of lacking fishy bottles in your bag when you travel or go to the office. The softgel conveniently fits in your purse or your pockets. With COGEL, VCO can now be taken anywhere, anytime, and, without leaving a fishy taste in the mouth. Cogel makes VCO intake absolutely hassle-free!

Second, COGEL is uniquely 100% VCO within the softgel. It is leak-free compared with hard gel capsules or bottled preparations. Just take it with a glass of water, and COGEL glides down fast and easy.

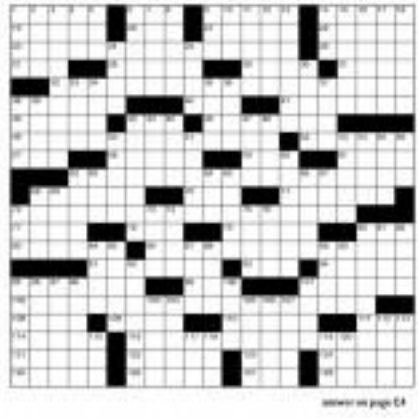
Third, 100% of the anti-oxidant properties and benefits of VCO that make the body strong, healthy and resistant to illness and diseases are packed in the softgel. All the body absorbs is 100% nutrients of the VCO.

Take COGEL at least three times a day for better health and wellness. Just remember to store COGEL at room temperature since pure VCO solidifies in cold storage and can melt when temperature exceeds 30° C. Keeping COGEL at room temperature ensures that the softgel would stay the same and retain its potency.

COGEL VCO is affordably priced at P7.00 per piece or P350.00 per box of 50s and available in leading drugstore nationwide.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — VISITOR



answer on page C4

Unique Yuletide party in Singapore

Kampung888

on sculptures of the Holy Family arranged stunningly. Manila palm trees with traditional *parol* or lantern-s surrounded the landscape. This bronze prize-winning entry is one of the most photographed installations at the festival. I was proud to stand in front of it and promote our country to all passersby.

To greet the New Year, a brand-new entertainment center recently opened in cocktail enclaves with a lasting impression of the talents, legacy and brewing prowess of world-renowned Tiger Beer. Freshly brewed and electrically served, TigerLive is an interactive beer chat nook with heartlapping lowers at the stylish gallery bar.

A willing volunteer, I was a bartender for a minute, learning to tap beer into a chilled glass and pouring at a precise angle to get just the right amount of foam on top of the glass. How tell I need to train to be beer-inducing 20 glasses of Tiger beer (or) a day!

Located at B...Street Power Station, TigerLive building is a former power plant—hit like Seattle—that has been converted into the newest eighbyd destination with the aroma of beer and lovemaking.

Another plus factor about this place is its close proximity to Marina Bay, the newest gigantic mall in Singapore. Walking waves among local and foreign shopping fans, World's to just filled with shoppers, food courts and Singapore's biggest hypermarket. Far *not* anywhere in the world and I'll find a way to shop away, whether it's Divisoria or Old Clay!

Food highlights

It's amazing how much Singaporeans love to eat, so every other establishment seems to be a restaurant or a food outlet. The food highlights of this trip were Imperial Herbal Restaurant, which served healing dishes to help cure ailments; Jade Restaurant of the beautiful Fullerton Hotel and Le Saint-tsunami at Casey Stone in Paris.

Renowned Jade Restaurant chef Thomas Chai presented a gastronomically exciting menu of ensemble Chinese cuisine. Dishes like Braised Cocquered by Young Coconut, Crisp fried Bean Rice Marble Cake in Light Soy and Sing Dragon with steamed Fish Noodles were a delicious treat.

Tagged as the "Soul of the City" Circle Quay is the evening epicenter of Thai bustling city. Sizzling dishes of mouthwatering fare from entrepreneur hotspots and chill-out places are all housed downward along the edge of the Singapore River. The complex is decorated with its Hindu Gan Christmas theme and several brightly colored trees that line a playful water fountain. The hottest dance spot is definitely Illusions at Esmod, where the floor to get in on Saturdays are two blocks long.

Billed as the most beautiful and artistic nude show, "Crazy Horse Paris" highlights the beauty of the female form. Its high lighting, spectacular costumes and strikingly choreographed routines, in one of Clarke Quay's entertainers, "Crazy Horse Paris" has raised the level of dancing into an aesthetic and erotic art form. With all dancers possessing eclectic ballet background, the show is indeed incredible. I have gained new ideas on romance and sensating moves to entice my husband. Definite hits on touching me with a wonderful Christmas gift.

Newly refurbished museum

My holiday trip included a visit to the recently refurbished National Museum of Singapore. Integrated with the old structure and innovatively renovated with state-of-the-art facilities, the museum installations cutting-edge and captivating ways of presenting history and featured stones and exhibitions. Interactive areas create fun and energy in what would otherwise be dead places in the museum.

CHRISTMAS cake serving made of panettone and other groceries

ARTIST Kam Weisser showing how a street painting is made and

COOL celebration of a Minnesang garden by Michael Bruce from the UK

POSING in front of the giant DHL hot air balloon before boarding

A CELEBRATION of Singapore's Peranakan (Baba-Cooks) performing

JADE Restaurant chef Thomas Chai and Raymond Gordon of Woman's Today

TIGER bartender teaching the Sea Princess how to tap

AMAZING dessert spread by chef Thomas Chai

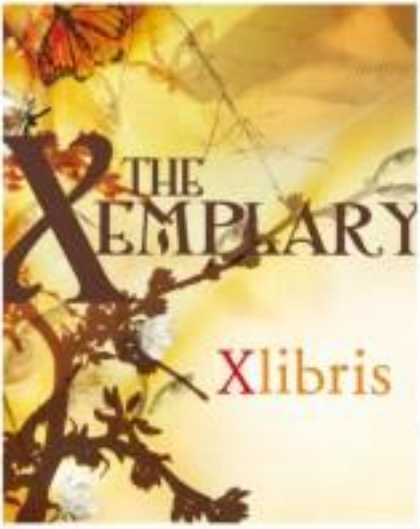
TIGERLIVE publicists Thomas Ng, Wong Wan Yee, Mayan Tang, two Tiger Beer Girls and Gary Yang

TRAVEL BRIEFS

TOP OF CEBU

The Manna Polo Plaza Cebu holds an array of activities to welcome the New Year. Enjoy pop music at the Al Fresco and Garden Terrace, Big Band Dance at the Grand Ballroom, and Classics at the Lobby. End the year with a dazzling fireworks display seen from the top of the Manna Polo Plaza, the highest span in town, 600 feet above sea level. You can stay at Manna Polo Plaza Cebu for P1,097 net per person, all-inclusive. Call (032)2111111 in Cebu or 8888 168 in Manila, visit www.mannapoloplaza.com.

Joint venture firm will develop Singapore's Sentosa



The success of a company rests much in how it takes care of its people. And so at Xlibris we make sure that every person who becomes part of our team gets what s/he deserves. On top of working with international authors, designing and editing published books, you're also well-compensated for doing what you love. Now that's the Xemplary Xlibris way of working. Come on and live it out for yourself. For more information about what we do, visit www.xlibris.com. For career opportunities, visit www.xlibris.ph/jobs.

Xlibris

WELCOME 2007
AT THE TOP

The best place to celebrate this New Year is at the newly refurbished InterContinental Manila. Join the rousing New Year's Eve Countdown Cocktail Party at Bahia on December 31 from 10 PM to 4 AM. For only P 950++ per person, swing with Cadiz and his Big Band, watch the city fireworks, and feast on the chef's festive cocktail buffet. Stay over for as low as P 7000++ inclusive of buffet brunch for two at Café Jeepney. Choose from several holiday room packages.

Do you live an InterContinental life?

INTERCONTINENTAL

Joys to behold.

Have a Kodak EasyShare digital camera now and have many merry memories to share.

Kodak EasyShare **V603****

- 6.1 MP • 2.5" LCD • 3x optical zoom
- TV quality video, MPEG-4 compression

Before: P21,995
Now P15,995**

C433
P7,995
P1,332.50/mo.*

C533
FREE K605E Charger
P9,995
P833/mo.**

C743*
P13,995
P1,166.25/mo.**

V610**
P27,995
P2,333/mo.**

Kodak

Visit www.kodak.com.ph and www.kodakgallery.com.ph. Available in all Kodak dealers.

0%

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Durang

'Without the priest, there's no Eucharist'

Archbishop Talamayan of Tuguegarao says he will still want to be a priest, if he is born again

OFFICERS and members of the Cofradía de la Inmaculada Concepcion with Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan (left to right): Susan de Cristobal Lorenzo, Danny Dolor, Jocson Bonsocal, Allan Tengco, Fr. Jaqueline and Evelyn del Rosario. Standing: Jessie Durang, Royzer Villaviciencio, Lolet Cassaviento, Herminia Blandino, Myrna Buenaventura and Fr. Johnson Sebastian

WHEN TUGUEGARAO ARCHbishop Diosdado Talamayan celebrated recently his Golden Jubilee as a priest at the Missalin Resthouse, he reminded those present that "without the priest, there is no Eucharist." He exhorted fellow priests to remain holy and steadfast in spreading the Good News of God's people.

Coincidentally, with Archbishop Talamayan were 13 bishops, including Papal Nuncio Fernando Filoni, and 34 priests. In all at mass set up in the ballroom with the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Fátima, patroness of Cagayan Valley.

When Archbishop Talamayan was ordained in 1956, with Archbishop Pedro Bucoy and 75 others, he offered his priesthood to Our Lady of Fátima.

He said he wouldn't still choose to be a priest, if he were born again.

Archbishop Deza, in his homily said, "Priesthood is all the work of God and of the Church. We must clearly answer Christ and project Him to His people. Wherever and whatever a priest is, (he) is symbol-bearer."

Archbishop Talamayan has been a bishop for 22 years and archbishop of Tuguegarao for 10 years. He retires Oct. 18, 2007 when he turns 75.

Through the Auxiliares Clérigos Diocesanos, the Vatican asks bishops who are 75 years old to resign.

Archbishop Talamayan is grateful for having been able to shepherd a million souls through many co-workers. He put up seven parishes and the magnificent Basilica of Our Lady of Fátima with the help of benefactors like Imelda Marcos and Cristina Ponce Enrile.

The Mr. Infirmary was filled with friends, nuns and members of religious organizations, particularly the Devotees of Nuestra Señora de Piat Foundation led by Gen. Edgar Aglipay and the Cofradía de la Inmaculada Concepcion headed by Imelda Cojuangco and Aurora Kintanar.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo attended the event.

Guests were humbled by the commitment of Archbishop Talamayan to serve God's people. His fellow clergymen also were to minister priests to every.

The archbishop and Fr. Fondel Aguirre, chair of the Golden Jubilee celebration, would like to thank friends and benefactors for making it be affair possible.

Rosaries

Josephine Bonbonada Serapion has been making rosaries for inmates of the Cebu provincial jail. What makes the rosaries special is that she prays for the recipients.

Her brother Bob Bonbonada told our client that (w)hile a (well)-(-ed) spiritual job as VP-finance of a big shipping firm to devote her time to her prayer community, Bukas Loob sa Diyos.

Her husband, Dr. Alan Serapion, gives her total support. A kidney and vascular surgeon in Cebu, Dr. Alan is a recent awardee of Bukas Loob sa Diyos, like his wife.

Asia Brothers about two months is the day she does not tell them on the bus about to bring people down to the Blessed Mother and Our Lord the night for rosary.

'Simbang Gabi'

Rizzon to Divine Healing Church in Bogo, Tinamnan, Gardner, Quezon has been saying to "Simbang Gabi" at 4:00 and 5:30 a.m. on FEN Channel 9. Fr. Joey Faller, founder and spiritual director, and his co-workers. Fr. Angelo Aballa, lead the Eucharistic rites.

Lucena Bishop Emilio Z. Elospor will lead the culminating ceremony on Christmas Day. The number of prayers is the healing of the nation that is currently beset with political scandals, social ills and natural disasters.

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippines Gaming Corp.—Cosmo Filipino, Government Service Insurance System, Department of Tourism, Old Mill of Asia made possible the broadcast

Scent of roses

When we attended recently the Mass celebrating the first anniversary of Fr. Lorenzo Manto as a priest, we smelled roses near the altar. The statue of Our Lady of Fátima was right in front of me, so I could not be mistaken.

Fr. Manto's friend told us he smelled the roses, too. Here he was able to get a beautiful image was a miracle. Out of the blue. A devotee offered one.

At 8 p.m. every Saturday, Fr. Nesa holds a Novena Mass for Our Lady of Fátima in the Immaculate of the Eucharistic Brothers of Mary at Nursing Site Drive, Sandiko Village, Cubao, QC.

Eleven seminarians and novices, Ben Jing Dionisio, also there. Four are studying theology, while the others are taking up philosophy. Most of the seminarians are poor and need benefactors. Those who want to help can find Fr. Bono at 09.08.7171617.

Book

For those who have been looking for the book "Nena Tere Nganito. Himbero of Si SEL," you can get a copy by sending a text message to author Bobby Caballero at 0961-9710505. Bobby, who spent a year researching, photographing Cagayan with French flavors and interviewing devotees, said the experience made him a more spiritual person.

"The sentimental interference of the Virgin is overwhelming," he said. "I can feel her helping me, protecting me."

I have read the book and was overwhelmed by the stories I heard about our Lady of Fátima. I also explored that of all her titles, she let me use Our Lady of Piat.

I suggest that everyone should read "Nena Tere Nganito." It would make a perfect gift to yourself and to a friend.

Kiel

Some residents of SF Pandacaqui such Fr. Dan Antonio of St. Anthony de Padua Parish, in Pampanga, Calumbuyan Fire and the St. Francis Choir very happy by inviting them to sing Christmas carols. Fr. Dan is raising money for the roof of his church. Just reserve a date by "Bessing." To help, text Fr. Dan at 0920-4607096.

Christmas Mass

The God Loves Catholic Prayer Community will have a Christmas Eve Mass at 9 p.m. tomorrow at No. 84 A EDSA II., New Manila, QC.

EMILY'S POST
Emily A. Marcelo

Married 8 years, together only one

Dear Emily,

I am a mother of two and my husband is working abroad. He has been away for almost 10 years and, under his contract, can come home only every two years.

I've been feeling insecure. I wish my husband is by my side. I want him to come home already but he just doesn't understand this.

He ignores me when I talk to him and I feel that he isn't interested in me anymore.

We've been married for almost eight years now but we lived together for only one year. I have plans, too, of going abroad to work because my children are growing up and the money my husband sends is not enough to support us.

My husband is also having an affair, which depresses me very much. I do not know what to do and I am very confused.

CLAIRE

Is your stomach strong enough to accept the truth without getting sick?

You're human and it's totally appropriate that you demand another from someone who promised he would—at the altar.

You are completely hapless for feeling down and out. But you and your husband have been together in work, only a year?

Unless you were not planning an here goodbye, which would only take a few weeks to pass and restore, this marriage hadn't even gotten strong roots to withstand the agony and heartburn of long separations. The additional seven years of marriage is just on.

Now, what to do, what to do? From the looks of it, it seems you'll have to see your boss down and really hardship yourself.

Muster all your strength to find ways of going through this life by yourself until such time that your husband regains his sense of family and takes care of you—emotionally—again.

Dig deep into your mind and unleash the creativity that can be locked up in you. Find ways of ending your dependence on your husband.

There's nothing more unattractive than a dragging woman who is healthy and strong. You might even annoy your husband again if you give in to him when an independent and resourceful side you see, barely needing anything from him.

The point is, you're not rich or disabled and you actually take to the keys the life that is uncertain and prone to ups and all your strength and serenity.

Who cares if he's not interested in you anymore? Is he interesting himself?

You both made your bed and must lie in it. You wanted security for your family and had to pay the ultimate price to achieve it—your love for marriage.

It's not a joke when they say marriage has to be nurtured. You cannot just pretend and not do anything about it. It becomes taken cared of. You have to feel being in it body and soul.

Your husband just gave you his name in marriage and his seed every two years to enlarge your family. Period. The money he sends to you doesn't a marriage make.

It is the day-to-day routine, the waking up, the laughter, the tears, the screaming and making-up, the hugs, the anguish of being apart, the longing and more on-square meetings.

You two have possibly become so dispersed with each other as a local teller and a client. One year of marriage and his occasional visits are not strong enough to make him love all or hold him to his relationship with you. It's all—so weak!

Talk to him the best way you could and love on the taste of the non-marriage. Do you it is reasonable?

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph. Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to Inquirer, 23 Ave cor Mc Arthur Highway, Balintawak, Quezon City, 1273. Fax: 896-6214. Mobile: 0918-5...

ENTERTAINMENT

GARY Valenciano and his wife Angeli turn over a check donation of P200,000 to Dr. Nicholas Agudi, United Country representative, during the Manila celebration of the UN agency's 60th anniversary

'Blessings in Disguise'

By Marinel R. Cruz

MULTI-AWARDED ARTIST and avowed Christian Gary Valenciano admits he had "extreme difficulty" dealing with the fact that he was an avowed father early on in his singing career.

In 1986, Gary got his then girlfriend, Angeli Pangilinan, pregnant with their first son, Paolo. The couple wed the later in August 1988. They now have three kids.

Gary recalls: "In my career [book] flight...or did my feelings for Angeli. We were in love, and before we knew it, Angeli was pregnant... my career was on fire, too." But singer-director-emcee titled "An Unlikely Couple."

The story is among several stories featured in the inspirational book "Blessings in Disguise"—a collection of personal accounts of "miracles disguised as unfortunate circumstances" experienced by noted personalities in entertainment, business, government and the arts.

The singer continues: "There was more than just love I cannot that convinced us both deeply. Angeli's sister's friends, whom I dated for a while, was very much hurt. [Angeli and I] both had to take the steps to repair the damage and, rebuild the relationship that we had broken."

More than a hundred stories on coping with heartache, loss, failure and disappointment are featured in "Blessings in Disguise." Dramatic actress Princess Punzalan-Field, in "My Search for a Father," shares how she rekindled her relationship with her father, the late Swedish journalist Olle Svanström, who reappeared after 13 years of absence. Multi-awarded singer Dulce ("Educated by the Best Teachers"), tells of how she needed to stop schooling at a young age due to poverty. Actress Iza Calzado ("Love and Betrayal") recalls how her mother's death pushed her toward a career in showbiz.

"Blessings in Disguise" is the third volume of the "Celebrities in Miracles" series compiled by Butch Jimenez and Flor Gozon Tecson. The book also features stories of show biz personalities Dimples Romana, Champagne Morales and Ayan Mesa-Lozada, Television Artist Joy Librodo-an Alejandro Rivera, talkshow host Isabelle and Jose Mari Borromeo, business leaders Felipe Gozon of GMA 7, Butch Jimenez of Better Than Ever Corona, entrepreneur-author Ginette Abaurrea, as well as Senyo Garcia of Europe's Secret Garden and Carolina "Kay" Jimenez of Bamboo Garden.

Tecson, who wrote the story "Hopeless Geek," is chair of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and former undersecretary of finance. She holds the distinction of being the first lady vice president of Citibank. Jimenez ("Every Loss is a Stepping Stone") is currently the president of the WWM (Top Outstanding Young Men) Foundation and senior vice president of the Retail Business Group of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"Blessings in Disguise" is now available at Powerbooks, Philippine Bible Society outlets in CR (for Bible and Cebu Airport's Garden in Tagaytay and all ABF outlets).

FLOR Tecson and Butch Jimenez

Metro Manila Film Festival

Maano Po Si: Guo Ai Di

Stars: Lorna Tolentino, Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin, Tyler Choi Jr., Sissi Rizo, Boots Anson-Roa, Jaclyn Jose, Christian Bautista

Directed by Joel Lamangan

This romantic comedy examines the "Mano Po" tradition, but as Pia says it now offers something new, according to Regal executive producer Lily Monteverde. "If previous 'Mano Po' movies focused on Chinese girls falling in love with Filipino boys, this time it explores the problems of the conservative class. Complicating matters is her childhood sweetheart, an actor singing idol—portrayed by Christian who makes his big-screen debut. "Erich Joel knew exactly how to motivate me," he recounts. "Television stars also had to shift from Pandemic to broken Tagalog in praying Islands, Locsin's iconic mom. Was she inspired by Meryl Lily? "Yes, Mother is more hyper!"

Hatakot Ka sa Karma

Stars: Gretchen Barretto, Rita Avila, Angelica Panganiban, Yasmin Kurdi, Bianca King, Rafael Rosell, Lina Lorenzo, Max Eigerl

Directed by Jose Javier Reyes

This horror trilogy centers in and out of an antique store that sells haunted pieces—a bed, cabinet and vanity—haunted by malevolent spirits. As OFW's wife fights with an overly maternal ghost for her son's soul, a young couple is harassed by the spirit of a deformed boy; a beautiful woman is stalked by an evil presence. This is the fourth Maalot film for Gretchen Barretto of Canary Boyet and Boyfriend—after "Markadets," "Spirit of the Glass" and "Kutob." This year, the filmmaker adds two lovely damsels in the repertoire Barretto and Panganiban. "It was a pleasure working with these three ladies," Reyes says. "My followers a color scheme for the look of each episode, white, gray and black."

DID YOU KNOW...

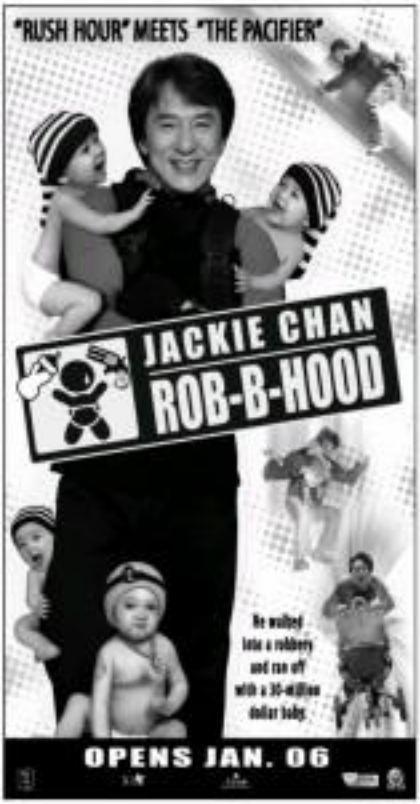
Critics pick "The Departed"

BROOKLYN, Tomorrow's ... "The Departed" and its director, Martin Scorsese, won top honors from the New Yorkers Film Critics Association.

The movie, about two undercover agents in Boston's police department and Irish organized mob, was also cited for Best Adapted Screenplay.

The Best Actor award went to Forest Whitaker for Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland," and the Best Actress, to Helen Mirren, Elizabeth II in "The Queen."

"RUSH HOUR" MEETS "THE PACIFIER"



OPENS JAN. 06

BUKAS DADALO ANG BUONG BANSA
SA NAPAKAENGRANDENG KASAL NILA
Judy Ann Santos at Ryan Agoncillo!!!

Kasal Kasali Kasalo

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: JOSE JAVIER REYES

glorietta | GREENBELT | ayala center cebu | ayala malls market! market! | Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

G1	1		2 HAPPY FEET	3 APHID TRAP	4 RETIRO		
G4	1 LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE	2 TENACIOUS D	3 CASINO ROYALE				
	4 ALL THE KING'S MEN	5 A GOOD YEAR	6 HAPPY FEET	7 THE NATIVITY			
GB1	1 TENACIOUS D		2 HAPPY FEET				
GB3	1 A GOOD YEAR		2 HAPPY FEET				
	3 THE NATIVITY	4 TENACIOUS D	5 LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE				
ATC	1 HAPPY FEET		2 A GOOD YEAR				
	3 THE NATIVITY	4 APHID TRAP	5 TENACIOUS D				
ACC	1 DECK THE HALLS	2 MISS GRIER	3 FRAGILE	4 HAPPY FEET			
M2	1 HAPPY FEET		2 A GOOD YEAR				
	3 THE NATIVITY	4 APHID TRAP	5 TENACIOUS D				

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	TOWN
Divine Grace! December 22 to 24, 2006	Heroes Exhibit! December 11 to 22, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Happiness Learning Center Christmas Presentation December 27, 2006	Rubrik Challenge, Grand Finals December 30, 2006

Greenbelt — Holiday Harmonies with the Philippine Madrigal Singers, December 23, 2006

Circuit — GREENBELT - The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & corporate events! Is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007. For bookings, pls. call Lizza at 752-7982 or (63-2) 757-0982

Ayala Museum — 19th - 20th Century Philippine Art from Ayala Museum Collection. On-going until January 2007. For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Give the gift of more than 1,000 choices - the Ayala Malls eGC.

Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time

From page E4

host," I had to go quite MASH-y whereas I can more ethnic looking. It's easier for me to go darker than lighter and say the hardest thing quite light. (On the second question), I have grown used to myself, my face. I don't think of myself one way or another—kind of beautiful or ugly I look like my mom and so that's nice to me (laughing).

In portraying a woman, wife and mother from the 1920s and 1940s, what are some of the differences from your own experience living today?

Many things. It wasn't just the 30s and through. On top of it, she's married to the CIA. She's unable to express her independence. That was probably the hardest thing. She could not ever have an improvised fight. Ever for could. I (her character) take an aggressive action or an insult? I always had to stay in my place and there wasn't anywhere to go.

It was not possible (for my character) to say, "I'm leaving," "I want a divorce," "I cannot this" or "I want this for my child." It was very claustrophobic in that marriage. It was very hard for me as an actress to do that, to make myself less opinionated, powerful and strong. (In a funnier note, I was sent to etiquette classes...for lessons on how to hold a cup of tea, to cross my legs the right way and to tilt my head a little and listen. It was funny that the natural way we hold ourselves today as women is not as gracious and elegant as the manner of that time.

That element of the film was lost on my character who was just drinking and ignoring it. But in my life, that element is there, even when it's just going out with the kids or when I go...Or plans for the holidays or even trying to figure out anything really. When I was pregnant and I just wanted to go to my doctor's appointments, I had to try to find volunteers to get there without people following me. All that little very uncomfortable, to be honest, but it's just a part of the business.

What do you think is the message of this film?

To be honest, I've not seen the film yet so I don't know which pieces were taken out or put in and how exactly it was told. I know that Bob's intention was—and he probably says it better—not to give a specific, like-what-you-should-be-experiencing element or feeling. Bob's aim was to show people and situations. It's up to the moviegoers to read into them.

My personal feeling on the political nature of the film is, it is always important to question your government and what it is doing, not just blindly trusting that it's going to make the right decisions, and if it's being moral or not. I think now is no exception. This is a time when we must be questioning, as we all are, the decisions of our current administration regarding foreign policy and so forth.

Will you and Brad do a sequel of "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" or perhaps another movie?

There was talk at one point about another one of those but it would just be too weird since it would be so much our life (laughter). It would be like a home documentary. They said, "No, we'll make another one and you'll have children" and we thought, "Oh, good" (laughter). We'd love to work together on something but it's tricky when you're a couple and the result leaves it. The movie should be a comedy. It's easier for people who are in a relationship to have fun with each other, take draw at each other, then take each other seriously. Nothing has come across as yet though.

With your current family and UN work, how do you juggle all of these?

Brad says I'm obsessive with schedule (laughing). I'm very fortunate to have him in my life. He's a great father...really dedicated. We take turns working and we both love being with our kids. It's a decision we made as if something we've wanted to do.

You must get exhausted from all your commitments.

I love everything that I do. I love so much for the UN and in film. I come with Brad and my kids. He do get exhausted like normal parents but we love it. If we plan to have a very large family, our shoulder's stretch is not over the next 10 years or else we'll be raising kids forever. So we've thought about it. I am sure we won't wait forever to build our family.

So will you adopt again sooner than later?

I think so, yeah.

In "Mariandor" and "The Good Shepherd," you played older women. How do you feel about aging?

I'm looking very much forward to growing older. I want to be an exhausted older woman who's very full life behind me and one still going. As an actress, they tell you things like don't look this way or don't age. Somebody even gave me advice not to play older women. To me, it has always been about the story and the character. Clover, my character in "The Good Shepherd," was such an interesting woman. I loved the challenge of how she broke down and aged. Personally, I like to see age on faces.

E-mail the columnist at <redacted>

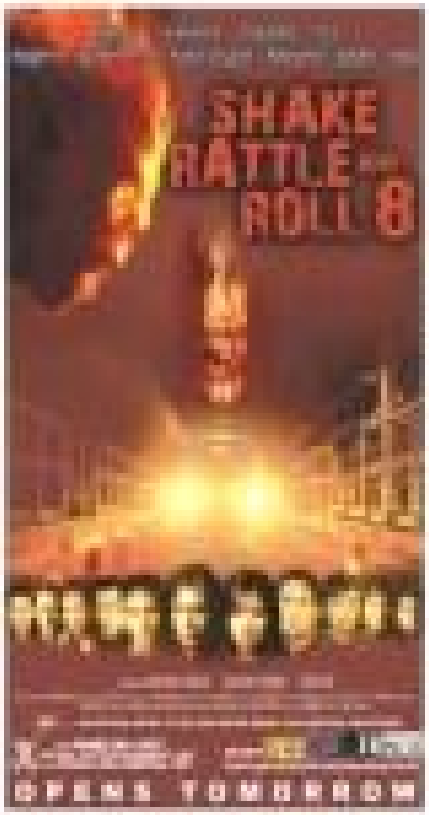
A PARTY scene. She was sure to "maximize glamor" for this movie.

FEEDBACK

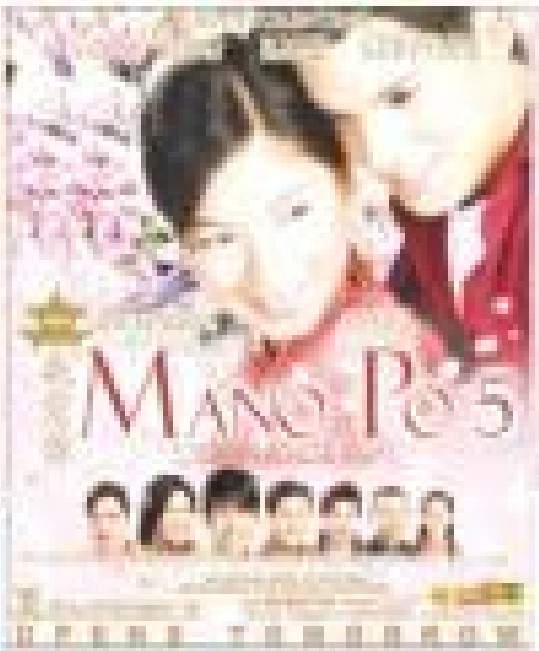
From Hagar Ann dolan (hagar_ann.dolan@bmmsoft.com)

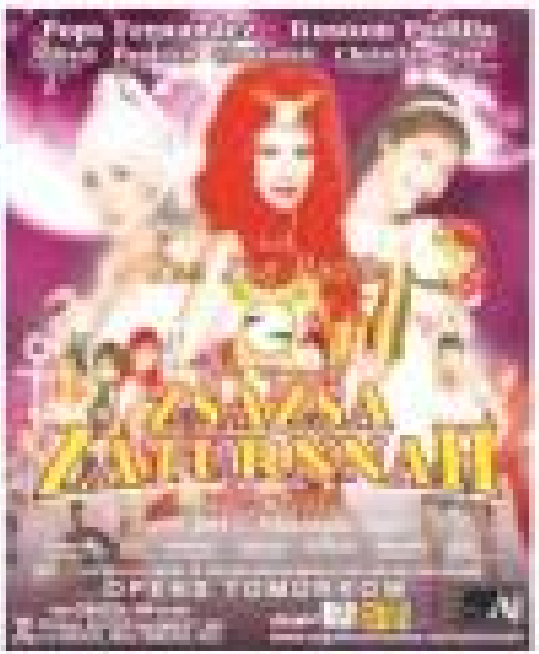
Hi,

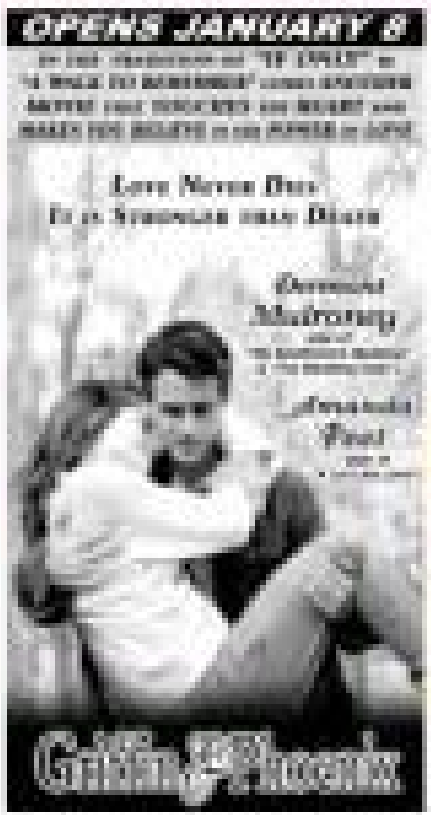
It appears as me that the film "King Fantasia" should be of great interest to all Filipinos abroad. Almost 20 percent of Canada's population consists of Filipinos. We look forward to seeing this film here.



A night at the opera can be fun







Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time

From page E7

ion passport. She has this connection in another country and in her mum's part of the world. I think that ties them together a little.

It must be easier now to have somebody around to help with the kids.

It's easier to be with somebody. But it's better to be single if you're with the wrong person (laughter). There were so many times

'It's better to be single if you're with the wrong person'

with Mad when he was growing up that I'd be up in the middle of the night, exhausted, making him sleep. Nobody was there—except for friends—who saw me exhausted, who appreciated my efforts. Nobody was there when I could look at or explode in environment with when Mad said his first word. That was a big one. It made me very close to Mad but there's the joy now of waking up in the middle of the night, shaking me angrily, and looking up at the other exhausted parent, shining the burden and knowing, smelling about a child's new teeth and just enjoying children. As a woman, having a partner who appreciates you as a mom, who remembers your history with your children is special.

Even though I had children, I didn't have a family somehow. I have a very small family myself. Brad has a wonderful way—he really does invest in our daily life together. He makes the most of every single moment whereas I tend to move very quickly through things. So he showed me there's more to enjoy day-to-day. That's probably the greatest gift and what I love about him. I think I regretted a lot of things when I met him. I didn't know anything about him as a man except what you all write (laughing). I found a really kind, funny, down-to-earth man. Just a very, very normal man that we secretly expect to be a different package. He is who he is in the world but at home he is a really wonderful friend and father.

Can you talk some more about how Brad has taught you to slow down and enjoy life?

It's easier to go on some trip because I want to have an adventure, explore and learn something, he'll make sure that we have enough days in just be with our kids or see the something special with the family. He reminds me—but it's OK to take a sleep break, to sit down, enjoy life, not sure thoroughly a and let it go past you. He's been very good for me in that aspect.

After the controversy of Madonna adopting a child, she stunned reaction from media—was that something—who be that we're "buying" babies. Did that hurt the chances of some babies being adopted?

I hope not. I hope people are smart enough to understand that it was a very specific situation of a country that didn't have foreign adoption (policy). So it's a very specific legal situation. I hope everybody wishes the best for that little boy and his new life. Again, it's the organize and promise media. It's good for media to question whether there's something at play that you need to understand or may not be right. Then there are people who decide to run and make the most negative way possible just to sell magazines.

I was working in India and I didn't go out of my way to study everything about it (Madonna's adoption of a boy from). I don't know a lot about that country (Malawi). I have never been there. I have gotten lots of counties to adopt from and that country has never been on those lists. I believe that anybody who adopts a child has that commitment to that child for the rest of his life. There's got to be some love in that situation. I don't think it's fair to just look at it as a negative way. We have to hope that's the best for that little boy.

You grew up in a show business environment. Do you think your children will follow the same path?

Strangely enough, because I didn't live with my father (actor John Voight), I didn't go to a bunch of film sets and things like that. But I did grow up in Hollywood and somewhat around that. What I am trying to give to my children—and it's the one thing I didn't have—is an final half a you. It was more, in a business sense, to be a child. Of course, they've been on film sets. They've moved into stuff very once in a while but they really spend the majority of their lives not around that (Hollywood). I am trying to give them balance, like with Mad, he came to work with me in India and he played with the local kids. He hung out at the local places and he didn't live a Hollywood life during that time.

It was the same case when we were in Africa. I am glad I can bring Mad to those foreign countries and he's not looking for a Winnebago and a hotel room. He's happy to go on some neighbor's house that's very modest and maybe outside the comfort zone. I hope with that balance, I'll instill in the children something that's more than just wanting to be in this business. But if they want to, God help us, we will let them (laughter).

Where is home for you?

We don't actually have. We have a lot of our stuff in Los Angeles but we're looking for a house outside of that. We just never back to Cambodia which I consider home.

How was your experience working with Robert De Niro as director?

On the set, Bob was so great to work with. When I first met him, somebody said to me, 'Look, he doesn't like to talk a lot. He'll probably talk to you for five minutes.' We talked for almost two hours because we ended up talking about world affairs. He's not a casual person.

Please comment on—first, how you look different in the movie because of your blonde hair. And second, how everybody talks about your beauty.

(On the first question), that certainly makes me feel good. I have always seen myself as different looking. In "The Good Shep-

WITH "Good Shepherd" co-star Matt Damon, a good friend of Brad's.

Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time

Front page E1

is need all over the world, has a genuine purpose to improve the plight of orphans and refugees and is a good mother to her adopted kids, Maddox and Zahara and to her own daughter with Brad Pitt, Shiloh.

Angelina stars in the movie "The Good Shepherd," which does not refer to the series whose birth is celebrated on Christmas but is used as a term to describe the idealistic and patriotic intelligence agent played by Matt Damon. In the movie directed by Robert De Niro about the origins of the CIA, Angelina's character is driven to drink from her frustration in living with a man (Matt) whose mark demands secrets and lies.

How are you going to spend the holidays?

We're going somewhere this Christmas. We'll spend the morning with our children, have a wonderful time with them and make it special for them and our boys' that. We're going to spend the day with some other people, bring them some things, listen and talk to them. I want to teach my kids that it's not about what they're going to get but it's about who they're going to think of, what they're going to do, what they're going to learn and who they are going to extend kindness to. The reason is a good excuse to teach our children something extra.

Spiritually, are Brad and you on the same page?

Yes, I would say that. We're not of any one faith ourselves but we are teaching the children about different faiths. We believe (in teaching them about) that. We believe that you should understand and learn about all the different faiths. There are many children and are where they full and celebrate many different things. I suppose that is a unique thing to be very much in agreement on.

Do you have any respite from the paparazzi at all?

We were just recently in our home in Cambodia and nobody was there. So there are ways and there are places (where) there are no paparazzi. We also went on Brad's parents' house for about five days. That was lovely and quiet. Hopefully in the years to come, maybe if we work hard, we'll have more of a quiet life. There are kids will have a more normal life. We have my son (as a) the paparazzi must affect us. It only does when we want the kids to have more freedom but other than that, we try to ignore it. There are worse problems to solve (in).

Would you like to get married again?

I have had two beautiful marriages (first to British actor Johnny Lee Miller and then to American actor Billy Bob Thornton) in my life. I don't feel a need to get married at all at this moment. But I am committed to another person (Brad) and there still. Also, I think that's the most important. Not people who want to be married, it's a beautiful thing. It's a wonderful thing and I'm all for it.

How much do you enjoy flying your own plane?

I love it. It certainly gives me a freedom that I don't have on the ground. Flying is a real skill. I know that sounds odd but I have spent my whole life with a job that is kind of odd. I interpret behavior, tell stories and I assume – those are not practical skills. So it was really wonderful for me as a woman and as a person to go back to school, take tests, study and learn a proper physical skill I can expand on, (hopefully one day, I would) be able to give service as a pilot.

How often do you fly?

How and I was about six and a half months pregnant. And then I wasn't allowed to fly anymore. I flew about two months after Shiloh was born. I fly when I can. I haven't been able to fly recently but probably I'll fly in January and February.

Which of your movies made the most impact on you personally?

I think everything does one way or the other. The Border and probably the truest example is "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" because it was about other countries. It was about being physically strong. It and Gia and then I got my humility and I'm most proud of. Cambodia. Cambodia changed my life. The next film for me (was) in Africa. In (a working with local people, you learn about those countries not just as a movie. But I would say that Cambodia was the most significant one. Learning about land mines and refugees and the history of a country I knew very little about changed me and made me start to question. That was really the beginning of me questioning things.

Has being human hindered or blinded your desire to help in many countries?

It has been the best use of my celebrity. When I was younger, I didn't know quite what to do with my celebrity status. We don't really do interviews to talk about other topics. You haven't come to many conclusions. You don't have a lot to say. So the fact that I've been able to really helped me. I wake up and I don't think about meaningless little things that I am worried about for myself. I'm able to focus outward and that is just what Shiloh says to (me. Certainly the position I'm in has made it very easy for me to be able to meet with officials, get briefings and do things quicker. That's an even exchange. The negative side of it is your credibility is questioned). A lot of people are not to make a very silly story when you're trying to have us something else or question why you do things. That's to be respected.

Is it more difficult to be a mother or a boy or girl?

I don't know. They're very different. My boy was my first baby so (but was hard. Perhaps when) they're teenagers. I'll say it's harder to be a mother of a girl to (be because sometimes) girls going on dates that since she has. That's when it comes back at us. They're interesting, crazy and wild in their own ways.

My son is very close to me. I don't know if that's because we were alone for a long time. I can see a little bit of a difference between a mother and son and between a daddy and his girls. It's quite interesting. On going birth to a child or adopting a child, I honestly did expect that there would be a difference feeling. I was very concerned that there would be and I prepared for that. There was absolutely none. Other than sometimes I look at Shiloh and I see Brad—(he's) sometimes (and) I don't feel any difference. That was a wonderful surprise. I was so happy to have Shiloh in Africa, that we could do that and for her to have a friendship.

Continued on page E8

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE
CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES
www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA
1 CASINO ROYALE • THX
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SK ILALIM NG COGON
4 KAMA SUTRA 3
5 TENACIOUS D
6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
7 SPIRIT TRAP
8 THE NATIVITY STORY
9 BORAT
& GOOD YEAR
10 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2

ERMITA
1 SPIRIT TRAP
2 REYNA
THE NATIVITY STORY
3 CASINO ROYALE
4 KAMA SUTRA 3
5 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
6 HAPPY FEET
7 TENACIOUS D

METRO EAST
1 REYNA
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
4 THE NATIVITY STORY
5 TENACIOUS D
6 SPIRIT TRAP
7 CASINO ROYALE
8 INANG YAYA

NOVALICHES
1 CASINO ROYALE
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
4 REYNA

CITISQUARE MALABON
1 ANG PAMANA THE INHERITANCE
2 REYNA
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER
1 TENACIOUS D
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
4 SPIRIT TRAP

Win an ALL-YEAR-ROUND Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Card!!!
The 100 winners of "Cash sa Pelikula" promo will also win Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Card of at least three (3) MMFF movies watched at any RWM theaters.
PROMO PERIOD

STA. ROSA
1 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS
2 SHAUN CLAUSE 3
3 MY FIRST WEDDING
4 DECK THE HALLS

LIPA
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE RETURN
3 MY FIRST WEDDING
4 STEP UP

DASMARINAS
1 FEAST
2 ANG PAMANA THE INHERITANCE
3 A GOOD YEAR
4 HAPPY FEET

ANGELES
1 THE MARINE
2 Ex WARRIORS
3 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
4 MEE-SHEE

IMUS
1 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
3 FEAST
4 REYNA

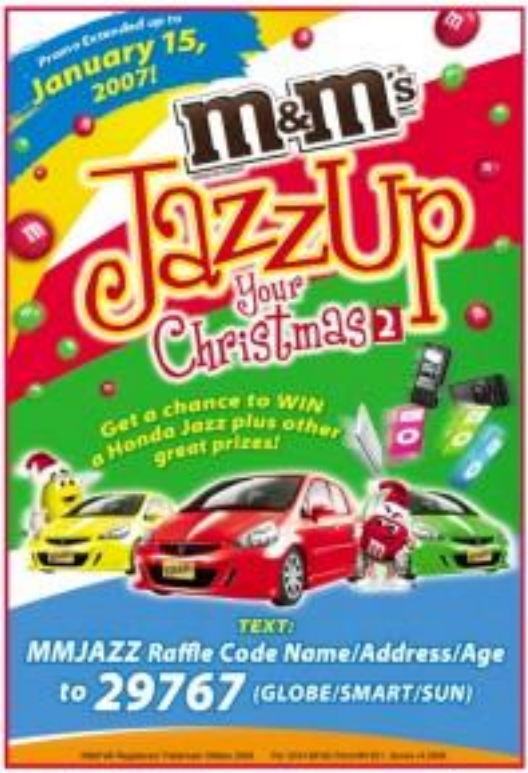
STARMILLS
1 HAPPY FEET
2 MEE-SHEE
3 REYNA
4 THE RETURN
5 FRAGILE
6 THE MARINE

BACOLOD
1 FRAGILE
2 MEE-SHEE
3 THE NATIVITY STORY
4 CASINO ROYALE
5 MARNIVARO
6 HAPPY FEET

ILOILO
1 FRAGILE
2 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
3 HAPPY FEET
4 REYNA

The Perfect Gift All Year Round
A Pre Paid Movie Pass or the Hottest Seats in town.

ENTERTAINMENT



Angelina Jolie opens up for the first time, part 2

How she, Brad and kids will spend Christmas

LOS ANGELES—Mabuyong Pasko!

On the eve of Christmas, we continue our column on Angelina Jolie, who embodies the true spirit of the season. She gives big chunks of her movie salaries to help people

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rhoderick V. Nepales